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Window on Jordan

Waking up to your horoscope

By Ibtisam Awadat
Special to The Star
FOR MANY, reading their horoscope has long become a staple diet. People love to know what the future holds for them. While they may not believe it, they still like to read what's in store for their sign.

Each morning Samir rushes out of his house to the shop to buy a newspaper, and goes straight for one particular page: the one that has the horoscope.

"I started reading my horoscope long ago in the school library, actually. I only went there expressly for this purpose," said Samir, a 15-year-old student whose ambition is to become a doctor.

"Unfortunately, the school's administration received complaints from other students who used the library about the noise my friends and I used to make in fighting to read our own horoscopes."

So, what's the reason behind this passion?

"It really lifts my spirits. Optimistic news makes me happy for the rest of the day," Samir said.

While many people consider "horoscopes," or "what the stars say," as a pleasant sort of diversion, others seem almost obsessed with reading the stuff—and they take every single word as fact.

"People say that women are more anxious to know what is going to happen," said Hanan Ahmad, 20, a student in the University of Jordan.

"I myself believe that no one has the ability to predict for certain what is going to happen. It's nonsense," Hanna added.

But people continue to read what the future may bring their way. "When I was 25, I was more into reading my horoscope, but today, 15 years later, my interest is fading," said Issam Mustafa, an electrical engineer at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS).

"I haven't completely stopped, but now I tend to read books which discuss scientifically the changes in my horoscope together with the characteristics



Continued on page 2

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
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- L'Europe ou «la politique des pas feutrés»
- La radio sur la voix de l'étranger

page 12

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Iraqi ingenuity lessens effects of sanctions

By Doug Struck

UMM QASR, Iraq—Four ships are moored to the docks here. Australian wheat pours from the holds of the Jessica into trucks on the pier. Another 40,000 tons of wheat, this from America, awaits in the hold of the Aral, while cranes hoist laundry powder from the Thor Sun, and chicken feed from the Dubai Orient.

"You see?" said Ali Nasser, the unloading manager for Iraq's main port. "The Iraqi people are not dead yet. We are alive and working."

Iraq has found ways to survive, despite years of stiff economic sanctions that were extended last week by the UN Security Council.

The sanctions have ground hard at Iraq. The once-large middle class has been stripped of its wealth and position. Fixed salaries are almost worthless. Engineers and doctors are driving taxis and plotting to flee the country.

The infrastructure is a wobbly patchwork. Investment has stopped, crime has risen and thousands of the weakest Iraqis—children and the sick—have died early, according to the World Health Organization.

But the embargo has not brought Iraq, or its government, to collapse. The country has reached a bedrock existence, surviving on legal imports of food, smuggled trade for oil and everyday ingenuity.

Muayad Abdul Amir, 35, used to be a construction worker. Now he rows a boat for an hour to reach grassy wetlands of the Shatt al Arab waterway where he plunges into the water and cuts off long reeds that he piles on his boat for the return trip.

Once ashore, he will sell his cargo to Sand Nassim, 50, who used to import fish from Bahrain. Nassim now uses his old

Albright presses Netanyahu to accept US plan

By Star Staff Writers and Agencies

LONDON—The Clinton administration committed itself Tuesday to a new course of diplomatic pressure on Israel, extending invitations to a White House summit meeting Monday on condition that Israel accept a package of US peace proposals it has rejected resolutely until now.

The invitations to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, made public at a news conference by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, amounted to a six-day deadline for Netanyahu to disengage himself from positions he described as recently as

Tuesday as essential to Israel's security.

The declared purpose of the Washington summit, to be hosted by President Clinton on 11 May, would be to open the final chapter of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The sides are now four years into a contemplated five-year working period intended to lead to permanent resolution of their conflict, and they are long past due to begin bargaining on such core issues as Palestinian statehood, borders, refugees and the status of occupied Jerusalem.

Before they can begin that, Israelis and Palestinians must break a 14-month stalemate on issues ostensibly solved by interim agreements in 1994

and 1995. The Clinton administration has drafted proposals combining new Palestinian security measures with Israeli troop withdrawals from an additional 13 percent of the West Bank, occupied by Israel in 1967, but Netanyahu has argued he cannot safely relinquish that much land.

Albright's announcement followed failure of her mediation efforts here and two telephone conversations each with Clinton and Vice President Gore. It reflected a longstanding US loss of patience with Netanyahu and a belief by policy makers that the peace making effort between Israelis and Palestinians is falling apart.

"We have a strategic oppor-

tunity to put the peace process back on track," Albright said. "We cannot afford to lose it."

Polite and even anodyne, Albright's performance avoided drama by design but broke substantial new ground. It marked the first public exhortation of progress that did not place equal onus on the parties, the first forthright statement that Arafat agreed to Washington's terms and Netanyahu did not, the first flat assertion that the American ideas "do not threaten Israeli security," and the first threat to "re-examine our approach to the peace process" if Israel does not come around.

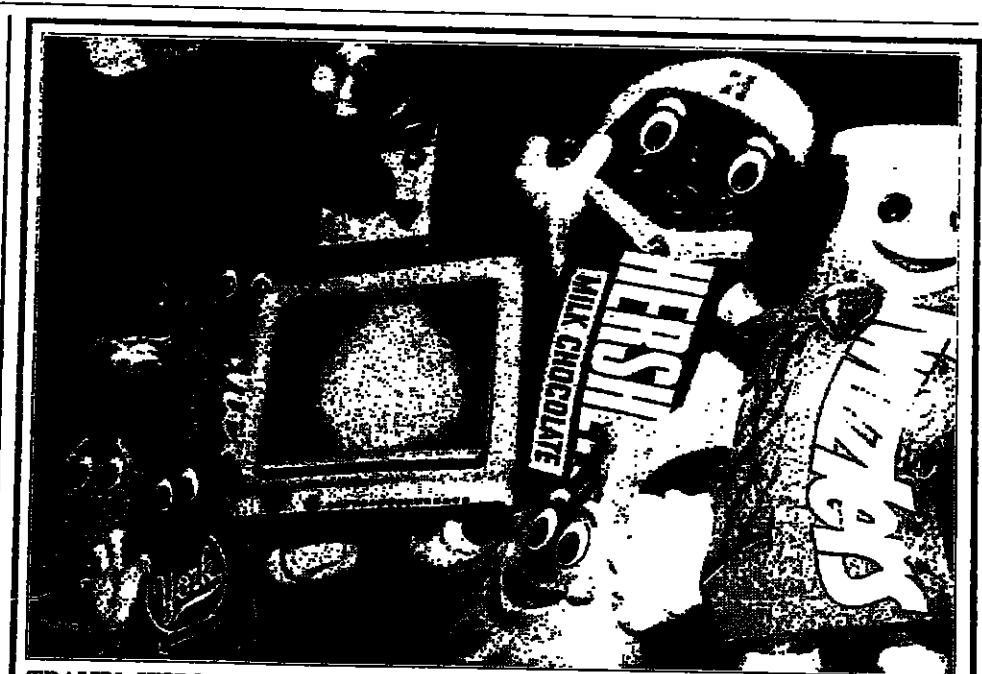
US officials had said some of this before in diplomatic contacts and comments made to reporters on condition of anonymity. But Netanyahu sought to deter any frank public statement of US differences with his government by mobilizing American Jews, Christian fundamentalists and friends of Israel in Congress.

The Albright remarks signaled a hardening of US proposals—described euphemistically as "ideas"—that have been described by spokesmen until now as undergoing constant refinement.

"The invitation to the Washington meeting is on the basis of those ideas, and watering them down is not in the works," Albright said.

Confrontation with Israel, should Netanyahu decide to resist, could prove costly for Clinton and especially for Gore, who does not wish to alienate Jewish contributors or voters in his expected presidential campaign. Netanyahu has demonstrated often, most recently when British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook insisted on visiting the controversial Jewish housing development of Jabotinsky in Arab Jerusalem, that he knows how to embarrass foreign leaders who challenge him.

After hearing Albright's public remarks, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organiza-



TRAVEL HERSHEY: These little guys surround a camera and a screen at the end of the Chocolate World ride that takes the guests' photos. The photos are then sold at the end of the ride. photo by Denise Sanchez

Initiation of 'driving ethics' Point system aims to reduce traffic mishaps

By Ilham Sadeq

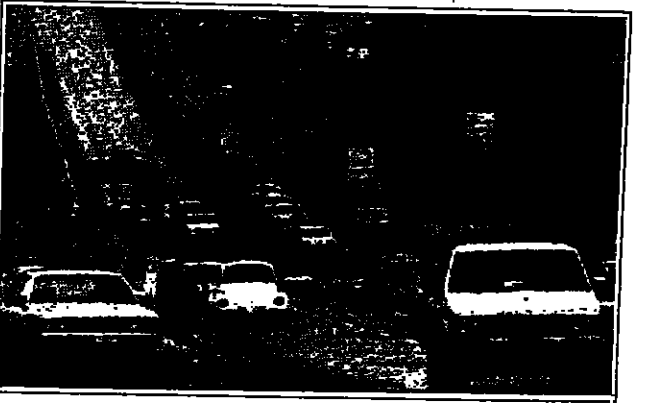
Star Staff Writer
CAR ACCIDENTS have been rising at an alarming rate in the last couple of years. Loss of human life on our roads is tragic and inexcusable, and the rising costs of personal injury and property damage that result from highway mishaps are an increasing burden to society as well as to the individuals involved.

In response to the rise in the number of serious accidents, the traffic control authorities have come up with a new plan to encourage safer road habits.

Starting on 1 April, the Traffic Directorate embarked on a new system they hope will deter careless driving by initiating an innovative traffic rules system through which to effect a "traffic ethic" on Jordanian highways.

Colonel Adnan Al Shamayleh, chief of the Traffic Directorate, says that "the introduction of the 'points' system" is intended to make the roads safe and secure for both drivers and pedestrians. He points out that "it is built on detailed studies of the causes of car accidents, in cooperation with international authorities that now use similar systems."

The points' system covers 33 different traffic violations which were seen by the Direc-



Maybe the new system will reduce car accidents!

torate as being the most common among Jordanian drivers. The simplest violation—such as not using a safety belt when driving—is given only one penalty point. But the points add up more quickly than you might think.

"When a driver collects 11 points, he is given a notice by the Directorate, which also offers him a chance to reduce his total by four points if he joins a two-day training course at the Jordan Traffic Institute or another rehabilitation center chosen by the Directorate," Al Shamayleh explains.

"The first grade violations—such as driving without a license, or under the influence

of alcohol or drugs, hitting a pedestrian and running away without informing the police, going through a red light, or putting a forged number-plate on the car—were intentionally given four points," Colonel Al Shamayleh elaborates.

There are 13 violations included in this first criterion. But the new system doesn't mean that the driver who violates the traffic law doesn't pay the usual fine.

Colonel Al Shamayleh adds that the old procedure for paying traffic fines continues, but that data on each violation—all of which are given a certain number of points, depending on their seriousness—is processed by computer to guarantee the system's accuracy. The Directorate also contacts all drivers in violation and informs them of the total points they have built up.

In this way, the driver is given an opportunity to change his/her conduct and reduce his/her number of points.

"If the point number reaches 12, the driver's license is taken away for two months; if it reaches 16, the period is extended to four months," Colonel Al Shamayleh explains.

Drivers who continue violating the law and register 20 points, will be deprived of their right to drive for six months, and, if the points are over 20, then the license may be taken away for a full year.

Referring to the accuracy of this system, Colonel Al Shamayleh points out that the Directorate has done its utmost to find eye witnesses to confirm that the driver has committed a violation. These witnesses could include private citizens, police

Continued on page 3

INSIDE

- Last of great poets page 8
- Insurance agencies doodle pages 5
- World Paper pages 9-10

Weaving a new way through life

By Michael Church

THEY GLOW from the walls of Middle Eastern banks and hotels; American museums queue to acquire them. What Gobel was to 17th-century France, Wassa Wassef is to today's potentates. If the name is strange, so is this tapestry's origin, yet anyone may track it to its source.

As you travel west through Cairo's suburbs, the landscape is quintessentially picturesque—brightly clad peasants toiling in the fields, oxen making slow progress under the palms. But it is also a vicious poverty trap: this is where fundamentalism seeks its recruits.

In the village of Harrania, in the shadow of the pyramids, I found the Wassa Wassef school: a scattering of white-domed buildings in a forest of palms. And there, on the walls of its "museum," were the

scenes through which I had just driven, transmuted into woven cloth. Nearby were the artists who had created them: young men, middle-aged women, teenage girls, working three to a room in monastic austerity.

Hamama Ramadan, a shy 16-year-old with two works on the go—a hen and her chicks, and a group of hoopes—said with a smile: "I have been working here since I was 13. I hated school: the teachers used to beat us all the time. All I can write is my name."

Her friend Saeda also left because of the brutality, but could at least read the news papers. "I love it here," she said, "but I'm getting married after Ramadan, and I don't think my husband will let me continue working."

Saeda's mother, making a tapestry of

rocks and shrubs in an adjoining room, has worked at the school since she was 10. "I made my husband agree to this before we got married," she said. "The good thing about weaving is that, if you are unhappy, it takes your mind off your troubles. And when you have finished, you can't remember what was upsetting you."

Nadia, 12, never went to school. "That was a privilege for my brothers, but at least they taught me to write my name. I came here a year ago, and learned by watching the older girls. The atmosphere here is wonderfully peaceful. I sit and think before I start a piece, because I need a clear idea of where it's going."

Whoever we talk to, the message is the same. This is a refuge from the oppressions of employment, from the patriarchal constrictions of family life, from the pointless brutality of school.

A young architect, Ramses Wassa Wassef,

founded the school in the 1950s, fearful that traditional crafts were dying out. "I had this conviction," he said, "that every human being was born an artist, but that his gifts could only be brought out if encouraged from early childhood."

He and his artist wife bought land in a poor village and spent two years getting to know the children. "I chose to teach them weaving," he said, "because it was an activity that involved a union of body and soul. Drawing, painting and modelling are not craftsman's trades, while work in mosaics, ceramics, wood, stone and metal do not present the same balance between art and craft. Tapestry-making would provide the happy-medium for the experiment I was planning."

They took their pupils on outings to the banks of the Nile, and soon, river scenes

Continued on page 2

05.10.1998

PAs optimistic about call for dialogue

Continued from page 1

line at certain stages—particularly in relation to normalization with Israel—and last year they, together with the opposition parties, boycotted the parliamentary elections.

The council of presidents of the PAs held its meeting Tuesday to prepare their agenda for the King's visit.

"Up to now, we have only discussed general issues related to the upcoming dialog. We don't know yet when the meeting will be convened, and we want everybody in the Professional Association Complex to take part in the talks," Abu Ghaidha told *The Star*. Abu Ghaidha did not disclose a specific agenda for talks with the King.

Abu Ghaidha, who also leads the 40,000-member Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA), the largest of the professional associations, said he also hoped that the talks will be frank and open, as the King said.

He did not rule out discussing with the King controversial issues with the government, most importantly those that would hinder the adoption of laws which the general assemblies of the PAs had called for and the government had previously rejected.

These include the cancella-

tion of the draft law relating to saving funds of the PAs, which the government planned to introduce earlier in the year. This issue created an uproar especially from companies in the private sector.

Abu Ghaidha added that the talks would probably include the issue of Laith Shbiel, the former JEA president, who faces charges for allegedly inciting riots in the south of the Kingdom two months ago, and other cases involving PA members.

Dr Bassim Al Dajani, president of the Doctors Association described the King's initiative as "a great step" which members of professional associations have long waited for.

In a telling statement, Dr Sa'ed Abu Maizer, president of the Dentists Association said that "because of the need for coordination between civic institutions and the government, the absence of dialogue leads to splits among various sectors of society."

Abu Maizer stressed that the PAs will explain "their anti-normalization stance, and its dangerous consequences for the national structure of Jordan."

A question that many are asking is whether a dialogue between the government and the PAs will lead to a similar

step with the opposition parties.

On Sunday, the King said that opposition that results from differences in opinion or tendency should enjoy respect. However, he added that "absolute opposition is unacceptable and unjustified," pointing out that "it contradicts with the Shura principle. We have to consult with each other and discuss our opinions, and search for those who share our opinions, so, eventually, the majority's opinion would prevail...and the results would be fruitful for all." His Majesty said.

About 13 opposition parties, which include Islamists, leftists and pan-Arabists, are against the Jordan-Israel peace treaty. Relations between these parties and the government can be described as cool, at best.

"Unlike previous ones, this government is not the sort to open dialogue with political parties," said Mr Ahmad Al Najdawi, spokesman of the Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. "We in the opposition have always asked for dialogue with the government, and we still are."

The government planned to draw a draft law for political parties and the PAs, aimed at limiting their activities.

Jordan celebrates King's assumption of powers

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein on Sunday expressed his thanks and appreciation to all members of the Jordanian family for their good and sincere feelings expressed in marking the 45th anniversary of His Majesty's assumption of constitutional powers.

On Saturday, Jordan celebrated the 45th anniversary of King Hussein's assumption of power.

Streets in Amman were filled with Jordanian flags, while newspapers and radio stations paid tribute to His Majesty who forged a nation.

The King announced one month's bonus pay for the more than 100,000 members of the armed forces and security services.

A procession of cars decked in flowers streamed through the capital Saturday, a public holiday. Night-time fireworks were planned as well as a government celebration on Sunday.

"All those who shared with me our march and responsibility in constructing our homeland deserve, side by side with me, this honour," His Majesty said in his remarks concluding celebrations to honor the 45th anniversary of His Majesty's assumption of constitutional powers, held by Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Majali.

"The National unity is sac-

rosanct." His Majesty said, affirming that it is beyond difference.

"Our endeavour for a just and comprehensive peace targets the interest of human beings regardless of colour, race and religion. This is what our religion calls for," the King said.

His Majesty affirmed the Iraqi people's need for every support, urging to reconsider the means of this support, far from agitation, wasting of time and not working. "We have to focus on what benefits the Iraqi people and human being," His Majesty said.

On the political level His Majesty called for utmost work, "to bring this night to a conclusion and to be on the verge of a new dawn." Prime Minister Majali, Former President of the Senate Ahmad Lawzi, President of the Senate Zeid Rifai, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour, Chairman of the Juridical Council Sleiman Awajan, in their remarks hailed the wise and courageous leadership of His Majesty King Hussein along 45 years since his assumption of constitutional powers. The remarks pointed to the great accomplishments that Jordan has achieved during that time.



Cars decked with flowers for the occasion

For the Record

Jordan, Israel talks

AMMAN, (Petra)—Minister of Industry and Trade Dr. Hani Mulki discussed with his Israeli counterpart Nathan Sharansky in Petra on Monday, issues relating to trade exchange between the two countries, as well as obstacles facing this process—especially with regard to Jordanian exports to the Palestinian National Authority and Israel.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mulki said the talks were successful and that the Israeli side has shown positive signals on the issues discussed.

"The Jordanian side stressed the importance of enlarging the A1 and A2 lists (trade lists between the Palestinians and Israelis)," Mulki added, pointing out that the Israeli side responded positively to this request. The minister said that there are many Jordanian goods that will reach the Palestinian market and that putting them in the A1 and A2 lists means that they are exempt from customs duties. "The talks also covered in detail the issue of exporting Jordanian cement to the PNA, as well as obstacles facing this process," Mulki added. With regard to the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ), he said that the two sides agreed on the need to implement technical standards and specifications for companies which could benefit from these areas. "The Jordanian side expressed willingness to extend the QIZ to other areas in the future so that the factories which will be established in this area would benefit from the privileges given to the QIZ," the minister pointed out.

The two sides also agreed on the necessity to apply QIZ standards and specifications so that companies would have the chance to export their products to the markets as soon as possible. Talks also touched upon the economic ties between Jordan, the PNA and Israel. The Jordanian side affirmed the importance of promoting trade exchange as well as economic growth and prosperity among the three parties.

American NGO mission leaves

AMMAN, (Petra)—AmeriCares, the first American non-governmental organization to fly relief aid to Iraq, recently delivered 41 tons of mostly medical supplies to the country. The group left Amman on Sunday to head back to New York. AmeriCares Media coordinator Mary Harrison said in an interview with Petra that the organization plans to make another trip to deliver more medical supplies because of the Iraqis' dire need for them. The Jordanian government, for minimal charges, provided the US charity team with a special air carrier to Iraq to deliver the supplies, as well as a Royal Wings charter plane to carry the 20 American volunteers who supervised the delivery. Ms. Harrison said, "The shipment is the first of its kind by the US since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. The White House hailed the relief shipment as reflecting 'the concern of the government and the people of the United States for the welfare of the Iraqi people.'"

Prime Minister meets US delegation

AMMAN, (Petra)—Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Salam Majali received on Tuesday a delegation representing the US Foreign Relations Council, headed by Henry Segman. The Prime Minister underlined the need for concerted efforts on all levels to push the peace process forward and remove obstacles facing it. Majali pointed out that peace has become an international strategy and that its absence will lead to dangerous repercussions and results that would not be in the interest of any party in the region. The Premier commended the positive Palestinian stand which is committed to peace. He also praised the Palestinian leader's acceptance of the recent US peace initiative. The Prime Minister also paid tribute to efforts exerted by the US council to encourage all concerned parties to push the peace process forward. The head of the US delegation on his part commended the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein as well as his Majesty's efforts to back the peace process.

Waking up to your horoscope

Continued from page 1

of each of the 12 horoscopes. However, Mustafa points out that his interest in reading the stars emanates from curiosity rather than belief, which is often the case with others who consistently dive for their horoscopes in their morning papers.

"We have 88 groups of stars, 40 of which were discovered in the 16th century. When we talk about a constellation we mean a group of stars," said Mr. Imad Mujahed from the Meteorology Dept.

"The 12 zodiac signs are made up of groups of stars which ancient peoples linked together, and to which they give different shapes," Mr. Mujahed continued. "If a group of stars formed the

shape of a lion, for instance, and the sun is in that spot when a baby is born, the baby will have the personality of a lion, which means courage and strength."

But again this really means that the process of foretelling features and events for the person concerned are mere speculations.

"We know that the sun and moon have a physical influence on humans, but the other planets and stars do not," Mujahed said.

Scientists believe that the gravity of the moon—especially when it becomes a full moon—increases bleeding. That's why doctors avoid the operating room during this time, if they can possibly avoid it. It has also been determined

that robberies, murders and traffic accidents significantly increase when the moon is full—a time also during which many people become abnormally nervous.

Mr. Mujahed, who has been working in the field for 20 years, also mentioned that hospitals caring for those who suffer from mental or emotional disorders often declare a state of emergency on the days when the moon is nearly full, because of the extreme agitation it produces in their patients.

In addition, solar activities have a similar effect on our bodies and behaviors—and also on the spread of certain highly contagious diseases, such as Typhoid and Cholera.

Albright presses Netanyahu to accept US plan

Continued from page 1

tions sought an urgent conference call with the secretary of state, now scheduled for late Wednesday.

"If she wants to try to ratchet up the pressure (on Israel) it's not going to work," executive vice chairman Malcolm Hoenlein said in a telephone interview from New York. "When it comes to second guessing Israel on security you cross a very delicate

line, and I think the administration understands that."

It was not yet clear, on the other hand, that Netanyahu will not find a way to accommodate Clinton. Albright sought to leave an opening by praising the "constructive and interesting ideas" she said Netanyahu had brought to the unsuccessful London talks.

Netanyahu, speaking here before Albright made her public remarks, said: "If I'm satisfied Israel's security is protected, then we can close the gaps."

The US proposal explored in recent days by US special envoy Dennis Ross calls for a phased Israeli withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank far below the more than 30 per cent Arafat had expected at this stage in exchange for increased Palestinian efforts to crack down on Islamist resistance.

It would also commit Israel to the further "redeployment" Netanyahu agreed to in January 1997, and require his government to stop expanding Jewish settlements in Arab east Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Netanyahu originally

offered only 9 percent, claiming more would undermine "Israel's security."

Under previous accords the West Bank is now divided into three categories: Area A, or full Palestinian control, covers 3 percent of the territory; Area B, where Israeli troops are no longer based but may return at will, covers 24 percent; and Area C, with full Israeli control, covering the remaining 73 percent.

Netanyahu is said by diplomats to be interested in creating a "B-minus" or "C-plus" category, with nominal Palestinian National Authority and Israel's security forces firmly in place. But when the American delegation presented that idea to Palestinians for the first time Tuesday it was firmly rebuffed. US officials declined to answer whether the American demand for a 13 percent withdrawal could be satisfied in part by such a hybrid.

A breakthrough in London might have brought Arafat a temporary respite, restoring some credibility to his battered peace policy, but it would force him to enter so-called "final status" talks with

Netanyahu holding far less land than he expected when he signed the 1993 Oslo peace accords.

A breakthrough might unite the Arab world behind Arafat at a summit to declare the peace process dead, but it could also undermine his position by triggering violence that spins out of his Palestinian National Authority's control.

Palestinian officials said Arafat would fly to Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt for consultations with Arab leaders after the London talks.

Arafat has said he may declare a Palestinian state when the deadline for a final status agreement expires next May. Diplomats fear this would prompt Israel to annex the parts of the West Bank it still occupies.

For Albright, success would restore some of the United States' lost prestige in the Arab and Muslim world, but failure could open a period of tension with Israel, which has powerful supporters in the US Congress.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Iraqi ingenuity lessens effects of sanctions

Continued from page 1

truck to haul the reeds to a market where they will feed animals, a substitute for the cattle feed that Iraq used to import.

"It is hard work," said Amir, dressed in the rags of his work. He will earn about \$1 a day, as will Nassim. With food rations from the government, it is enough for both men to get by. "We do what we must to survive," said Amir.

That versatility has been the key to Iraq's survival under what has been a starvation income for most of seven years.

Officially, Iraq was permitted only limited trade with its neighbors after 1990, when the sanctions were imposed following the invasion of Kuwait. In May 1996, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein finally agreed to a UN plan allowing him to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months, to be used for food, medicine and reparations for Kuwaitis and other victims of the Gulf War.

In February, the UN Security Council agreed to more than double the "oil-for-food" program. Iraq may now sell \$5.2 billion worth of oil every six

months, although the government has said its damaged oil industry cannot pump that much. The income is to be spent only on food, medicine and approved humanitarian supplies.

But in the major cities, the markets are full of imports supposedly banned by the embargo. In Basra at the southern tip of Iraq, the souk that opens after dusk cools the air is packed with women in black chadors examining kiwis from Iran, imported clothes from Indonesia, French-made infant formula and American laundry detergent.

Salah Awad, a chandelier salesman, shows off a light fixture for 250,000 Iraqi dinars—about \$200, astronomically higher than an average government worker's 4,000-dinar monthly wage.

"There are those with money," Awad said with a smile. There are smugglers. "Do you think they could keep 23 million people fed and clothed on \$2 billion every six months? Of course not," scoffed a European diplomat in Baghdad. "It's peanuts. It's flour and sugar and beans. But you need shoes, you need coffee, you

need ashtrays and jeans and spare parts for the cars. You get it by smuggling."

The lines of that illegal supply are so routine that the government places smuggling orders, said an Iraqi involved in the business. Speaking privately, he said it would be dangerous to be named.

He said government agencies inform his company of what they need, from uniforms to filing cabinets. The company arranges for the purchase overseas, and is paid by the government in oil.

"You can choose to take delivery of the oil in the north or in the south," said the Iraqi. From the north, oil tanker trucks will go into Iran, where the oil is refined. From the south, it might be loaded on small vessels at Basra, ships small enough to hug the coastline of the Gulf and avoid the naval blockade to reach Iraq or Abu Dhabi.

Once it is safely "legal," the oil is converted to cash to pay for the goods, which arrives in the country through a variety of channels.

Ships delivering food aid engage in smuggling of a sort. They arrive at the Umm Qasr port almost empty of fuel. They

take on huge quantities of the cheap diesel fuel in their tanks, sailing out past the American or allied naval ships enforcing the blockade, according to diplomats familiar with the maneuver.

While the embargo has hurt many Iraqis, others have profited. Lawyers are said to be doing very well with the rise of house sales and divorces. Repairs of all types are busy; auto mechanics are in prime demand to keep old cars on the roads with few new parts.

Nature's laws of survival are mimicked in commerce: If the appliance store is failing, open up a repair shop. If the supermarket cannot survive selling poor Iraqi brands, switch to smuggled varieties. Everything is available here, for a price.

Since the oil-for-food program began in December 1996, rationing providing a diet of 2,000 calories a day—a meager, meatless, but sustainable diet—have been distributed. Eric Falk, a spokesman for the UN humanitarian efforts in Iraq, said an extensive monitoring program has satisfied observers that the food ration is reaching "99.5 percent" of Iraq's population.

Health experts and Iraqi doctors say the malnutrition is no longer the result of lack of basic food, as it was in 1993, 1994 and 1995. Instead, it stems from the damaged infrastructure that cannot provide sanitary drinking water nor properly handle sewage.

"It's not directly lack of food," said Evgeni Parfenov, head of the Iraq delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "It's very, very bad water."

That leads to intestinal diseases that can dehydrate and eventually kill children, a problem made more acute in rural areas where parents have no money and little knowledge of what to do.

In the countryside outside Basra, Yacoub Yusef gathers his seven children around him, and says they would have starved without the food ration. But now, "thanks to God, we are all healthy," he said. "The most important thing is to survive."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Weaving a new way

Continued from page 1

body joins in on the birds and clouds. The excitement is extraordinary. She pointed out works of particular significance, such as the picture of a village devoid of people, with one house standing darkly apart. "That was by a boy called Shebata Hamza. A wonderful artist, but schizophrenic. This was his last work; the dark house is his own. He committed suicide."

Another tapestry showed a crisis more happily resolved. "This is by a woman called Karima," she said. "She came to me and said her husband was taking another wife, and that she was too distressed to make anything beautiful. I

told her to put her pain into her weaving, so she started a battle scene full of blood and bodies."

After six months she was emotionally exhausted, so she put in a pool for the soldiers' horses to drink from. The top of her tapestry is serene. That reflected the fact that she had come to terms with her husband's decision.

You couldn't wish for a more benign therapy. And since these artists receive a quarter of the price their creations fetch, they walk tall among their neighbors.

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JORD

For the Record

Jordan, Israel talks

AMMAN, (Petra)—Minister of Industry and Trade Dr. Hani Mulki discussed with his Israeli counterpart Nathan Sharansky in Petra on Monday, issues relating to trade exchange between the two countries, as well as obstacles facing this process—especially with regard to Jordanian exports to the Palestinian National Authority and Israel.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mulki said the talks were successful and that the Israeli side has shown positive signals on the issues discussed.

"The Jordanian side stressed the importance of enlarging the A1 and A2 lists (trade lists between the Palestinians and Israelis)," Mulki added, pointing out that the Israeli side responded positively to this request. The minister said that there are many Jordanian goods that will reach the Palestinian market and that putting them in the A1 and A2 lists means that they are exempt from customs duties. "The talks also covered in detail the issue of exporting Jordanian cement to the PNA, as well as obstacles facing this process," Mulki added. With regard to the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ), he said that the two sides agreed on the need to implement technical standards and specifications for companies which could benefit from these areas. "The Jordanian side expressed willingness to extend the QIZ to other areas in the future so that the factories which will be established in this area would benefit from the privileges given to the QIZ," the minister pointed out.

The two sides also agreed on the necessity to apply QIZ standards and specifications so that companies would have the chance to export their products to the markets as soon as possible. Talks also touched upon the economic ties between Jordan, the PNA and Israel. The Jordanian side affirmed the importance of promoting trade exchange as well as economic growth and prosperity among the three parties.

American NGO mission leaves

AMMAN, (Petra)—AmeriCares, the first American non-governmental organization to fly relief aid to Iraq, recently delivered 41 tons of mostly medical supplies to the country. The group left Amman on Sunday to head back to New York. AmeriCares Media coordinator Mary Harrison said in an interview with Petra that the organization plans to make another trip to deliver more medical supplies because of the Iraqis' dire need for them. The Jordanian government, for minimal charges, provided the US charity team with a special air carrier to Iraq to deliver the supplies, as well as a Royal Wings charter plane to carry the 20 American volunteers who supervised the delivery. Ms. Harrison said, "The shipment is the first of its kind by the US since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. The White House hailed the relief shipment as reflecting 'the concern of the government and the people of the United States for the welfare of the Iraqi people.'"

Prime Minister meets US delegation

AMMAN, (Petra)—Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Salam Majali received on Tuesday a delegation representing the US Foreign Relations Council, headed by Henry Segman. The Prime Minister underlined the need for concerted efforts on all levels to push the peace process forward and remove obstacles facing it. Majali pointed out that peace has become an international strategy and that its absence will lead to dangerous repercussions and results that would not be in the interest of any party in the region. The Premier commended the positive Palestinian stand which is committed to peace. He also praised the Palestinian leader's acceptance of the recent US peace initiative. The Prime Minister also paid tribute to efforts exerted by the US council to encourage all concerned parties to push the peace process forward. The head of the US delegation on his part commended the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein as well as his Majesty's efforts to back the peace process.

Original: Photographs by David Roberts, Deborah, Pimenton, Yonel, Diaz and others. Views of Jerusalem, Lebanon and Holy Land. Also 19th century engravings by Wm. Bertlett. For information call: Tel. 5664805

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar

Kuwait releases Jordanian prisoners

Kuwait is to release 13 Jordanian prisoners in a general amnesty. Kuwaiti Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khalid Al Sabah said that a further 25 Jordanian prisoners held in a Kuwaiti prison will be transferred to Jordan under a "collective passport." Earlier it was reported that a 41-persons delegation comprising family members of prisoners are being allowed a visit that will take place on 15 May. This visit, which is organized by the International Red Cross in cooperation with the Kuwaiti government is the fourth of its kind since 1995.

High accident rate

A recent study found that 2,481 deaths and 66,088 injuries occurred on Jordanian roads in the last five years. The cause for a high percentage of the accidents is the same as the reason a large number of traffic violations are handed out—arbitrarily and often carelessly changing lanes without signalling, and sometimes not driving in any lane at all.

Statement denied

Minister of Public Works and Acting Information Minister Nasser Al Lawzi was quoted as saying that a statement recently issued by the Abu Thir Al Ghofari group claiming responsibility for the explosion that occurred in a car outside the Jerusalem Hotel has no credibility. He pointed out that those who signed the statement had no precise information about the explosion. He added that investigations are still under way. The security forces have already detained a number of people from the People's Democratic Party, Hashd, but it is not known whether there is a connection. A number of people were also arrested from the Baqaa Camp. Arrests in Amman, Zerga and Baqaa were confirmed by Mohammad Al Azaidah, who heads the Public Freedoms Committee of the Lower House.

Teachers

About 600 teachers from public schools around the country are to be retired. It is understood that the teachers, both male and female, were going to retire voluntarily anyway.

Hamas

It was first thought that Hamas will be moving its offices to Damascus. However Hamas politburo member Dr Musa Abu Marzook said that such news is totally incorrect, adding that Hamas will stay put in Jordan. He added that the issue is not even on the agenda. Hamas officials in Amman pointed out that relations with Jordan are good.

Ambassadors

Starting from the beginning of this month members of the Jordanian diplomatic corps are to have a new salary scale as agreed upon by the Council of Ministers. An ambassador with a special mission is to receive JD 900 per month while an ordinary ambassador is to receive JD 600.

Law

The Judicial Council has appointed Taher Hikmat to be the president of the Higher Judicial Council and the Head of the Cassation Court. Mr Hikmat is a former minister who has served in many previous governments.



His Majesty King Hussein speaks to the Royal Special Forces on the occasion of its 35th anniversary Sunday, which also coincided with His Majesty's 45th anniversary of his assumption of constitutional powers. The King also instructed Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Al Majali to pay one month's salary to those who work in the Royal Forces, police, civil defence, and General Intelligence Dept. Her Majesty Queen Noor also attended the celebration.

Point system aims to reduce traffic mishaps

Continued from page 1

patrols, commuters who use public transport vehicles, mobile cameras, etc," he adds.

Colonel Al Shamayleh maintains that "it is still premature to judge whether this system is practical enough to provide a deterrent. However, first readings of field operations conducted by traffic patrols indicate that positive results could be attained in the long run."

"So far, no driver has collected 12 points and our doors are open for any citizen who claims he has been badly treated by our staff," says Colonel Al Shamayleh.

He concludes by calling on all drivers and pedestrians to abide by the traffic rules. Actually, the deterrent must also come from the people themselves—it's difficult to compel drivers to be committed to the new system if they lack the motive of the intention to do so.

Those reluctant to accept the new system should remember that there were 16,259 car-related injuries in 1997. This was in addition to 577 fatalities. Of course, the material loss—estimated at JD100 million—is equally serious, including dam-

age to cars and highway facilities. The rise in the number of injured persons who, as a result of accidents, incur medical costs and are often out of a job during their recovery period, as well as those permanently handicapped and who will never be able to work, also takes its financial toll.

President of the Jordan Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents, Mohammad Al Dahas tells *The Star*, "we fully support the government in introducing this system as we have been calling for this action for the last 10 years."

Al Dahas says that while there is a case for applying the law rigorously, it's sometimes better to be flexible and patient in the process of implementing it. "No one can deny that it can function as a deterrent for careless drivers who expose their lives and lives of others to danger."

But the Road Society has further opinions about the system. A demand to increase points for violations of first grade offenders. "Four points for each of these violations is not enough," Al Dahas suggests. Explaining his view, he says "some offenses listed in the first



Al Shamayleh

criterion are not merely violations, they are crimes."

However, the Society applauded the application of the points system. "We do agree with the Traffic Directorate that the new system should go through a probation period of about one year, at the end of which the results would be reviewed," Al Dahas says.

But he points to another important issue. "It's better to focus on the causes behind such violations—

who violates and why?" He also notes that it is imperative to implement the law justly and on all violators without exception.

But putting the blame on drivers is not entirely fair. "Sometimes road mishaps have to do with the nature of the road—an uneven road can sometimes lead to serious accidents. Thus the responsibility is shared between several parties—the car, driver and the road," Al Dahas suggests.

Sharing this view also is Lt Mohammad Sayel Al Rosan, of the Public Relations Department, who maintains that sometimes pedestrians have a role in raising the number of car accidents. They don't always cross the street at the pedestrian markings. "There are pedestrians who prefer to cross a crowded street instead of using one of the many pedestrian tunnels constructed for exactly that purpose," Lt Al Rosan says.

Al Dahas suggests that public transportation has to be enhanced to reduce the number of private cars on the road, minimizing the number of accidents and making the roads safer for everyone.

State of the press

INTERNATIONAL PRESS Freedom Day, held Sunday, was marked by a feeling of renewed optimism despite the challenges that lie ahead. On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers, Jordan's Press Association (JPA) has urged the King to pardon all journalists being tried in court for allegedly violating the press law.

For its part the JPA promised that it would use the occasion to instill a more professional attitude in the field of journalism. In a statement, it added that the JPA is following carefully the government's plan to introduce amendments to the Press and Publications Law of 1993. The Press Association expressed its wish to be consulted in all stages in the drawing the draft, saying that it considers itself the most appropriate body to give advice in this matter.

Clearly the statement was a conciliatory one. The JPA said that it wants to "give advice and help." Maybe this will be a new chapter in Jordan's press relations as the JPA is recognized by the press body itself—dailies as well as weeklies.

Earlier in the week, two new reports issued by international bodies criticized Jordan's press freedoms. Jordan is generally thought to have one of the most liberal press laws in the region. Nevertheless, both the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the Jordanian Society for Human Rights (JSHR) were equally strong on the issue.

JSHR said that freedom of press and opinion, and the right of citizens to have access to information, deteriorated in 1997.

It said "May 3 1997 to May 3 1998 period was a black year for the freedom of the press and expression in Jordan as was clear in the reports of three world human rights groups."

The CPJ was scathing. It placed two Arab leaders on its list of the 10 "enemies of the press" for 1997 in its report issued earlier this week. These were Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali, and Tunisian president Zein Al Abedine.

The report said that all Arab governments must protect and preserve the freedom of the press and push forward their democratic processes. However, the CPJ also urged journalists to abide by the codes and ethics of the profession.

The Jordanian Society said that "in monitoring the exercise of press freedoms in Jordan over the past year," it "regrettably did not find any bright aspects that deserve praise." But it pointed out that there was an exception to this—the "historic verdict passed by the high court last January which ruled that the temporary Press and Publications Law was unconstitutional, as were the subsequent administrative decisions that prevented the weeklies from publishing."

The JSHR went on to publish the court cases against journalists during 1997.

Freedom House, an organization that is dedicated to the promotion of liberty and democracy said that only 20 percent of the world's people live in countries with a free press. The Washington-based organization said that "world-wide today, only one person in five has access to news and analysis that is not distorted or censored."

In a survey, Freedom House suggested that in comparison to last year, one percent fewer of the world's population live in nations with a free press. ■

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RJ flights to Tehran resume

Amman (Petra)—Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) resumes its regular flights to the Iranian capital, Tehran, next month after an 18 year hiatus, RJ official said Wednesday.

The volume of religious tourism from Iran to Islamic sites in Jordan will be boosted by the new schedule.

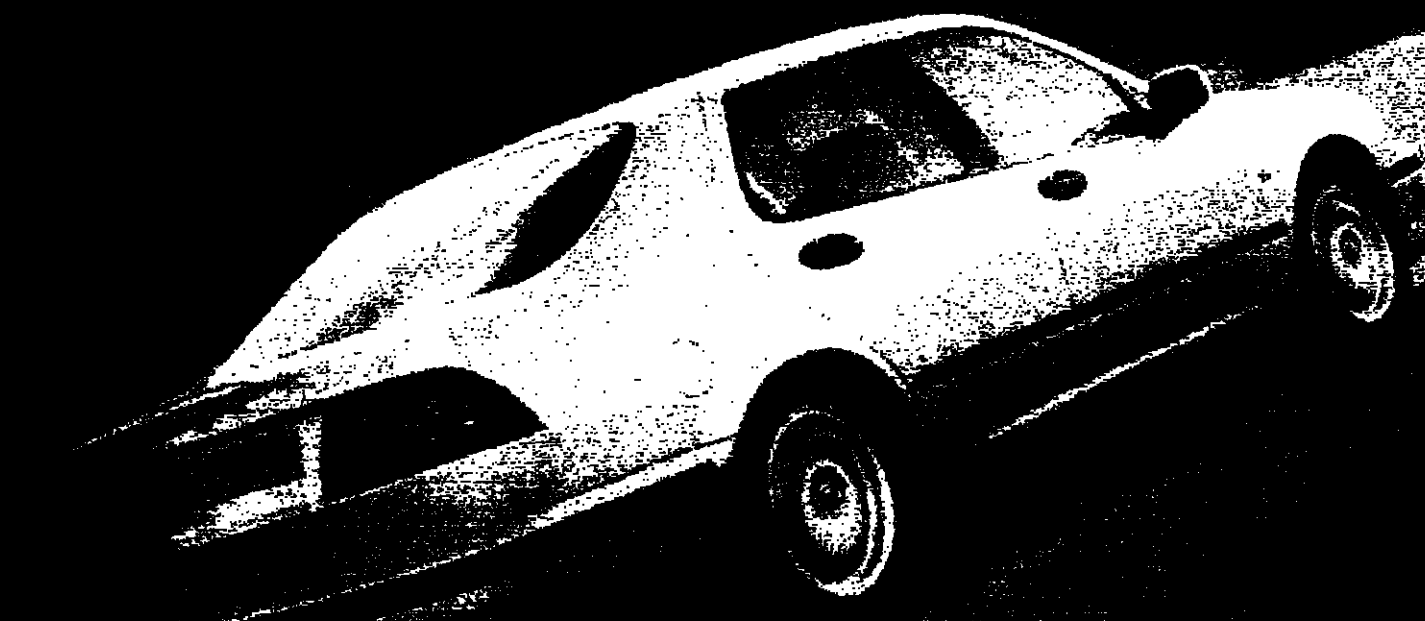
The number of Iranians visiting the sepulchers of some followers of Prophet Mohammad have noticeably increased during the last two years.

The flights will also encourage commercial relations between Jordanian and Iranian businessmen. The RJ is due to fly twice weekly to Tehran. No Iranian airline has declared its intention to fly to Amman in the near future, an RJ official said. ■

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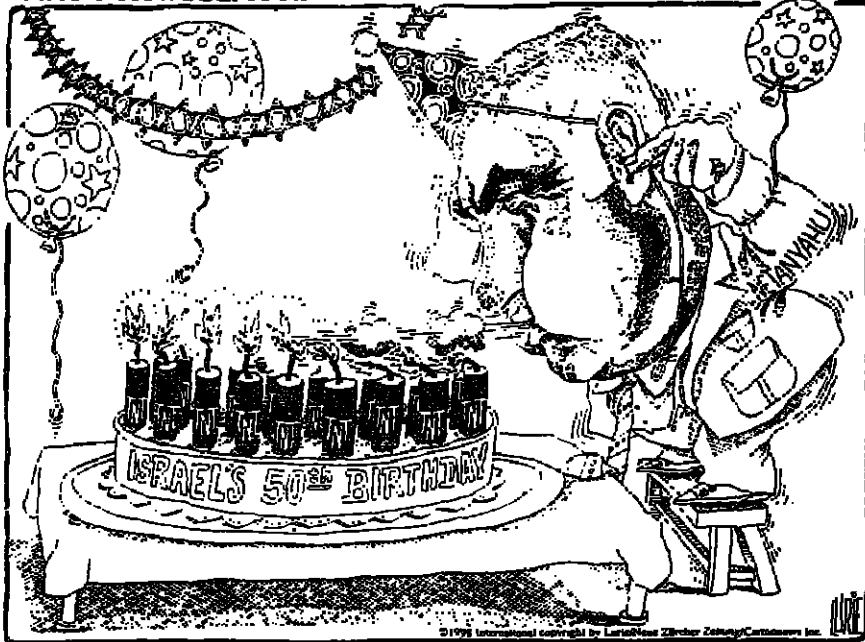
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Great expectations

For the Palestinians, the waiting game carries a hefty price tag as well. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat must deliver something to his people in order to maintain internal unity and avoid a collapse of Palestinian institutions in the self-rule areas. The Palestinians are in dire need of international, and Arab, support. This must be forthcoming if they are to emerge as winners once the Netanyahu era comes to a dismal end. ■



Albanian children outside a home that was shelled by Serbians, Sunday

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Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

What the new Lebanon needs

However, these minor patch-

Moreover, the electoral system needs reforms that would boost political parties that are non-sectarian. This would be accomplished if the whole country was turned into one electoral unit where parties run on the basis of a national platform, not powerful family names or sectarian and regional identities. The success of such a system would become the litmus test for political maturity and awareness in the new Lebanon.

The recent talk of an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the South, with French mediation, has yet to materialize. No pre-conditions by Israel should be accepted except for the full and complete implementation of UN Resolution 425 which calls for a total and an unconditional withdrawal from South Lebanon. That will pave the way for peace. ■

The constant shelling of villages, Israeli aggression and bombings that sometimes affect the country as a whole, like Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996, are a constant reminder of the fragility of the new peace.

I would seriously suggest not only a law allowing for civil marriages, but also pecuniary and moral incentives to encourage inter-sectarian marriages which, in a generation or two, could result in the social unification of the Lebanese population. In addition, mixed religious neighborhoods and towns should be encouraged, as they already exist in different parts of the country.

Second: The social infrastructure of the country remains in shambles, with a devastated middle and working class. The Lebanese middle class was practically decimated during the civil war, leaving two broadly-defined social classes in the country: the wealthy on one side, especially the wealthy political elite, and, on the other side, the majority of the Lebanese people, impoverished, powerless, and working hard just to make ends meet.

Islam and cultural interaction

***Beyond Belief*, by V.S. Naipaul. London, 1998**
Reviewed by
Anatol Lieven

But we should be grateful that Naipaul did not tie himself down too closely to his original program. For there have been quite enough schematic accounts of the Islamic world, whether from critics or self-

These qualities are closely related to Naipaul's technique in his novels. More surprising perhaps is Naipaul's warm sympathy even for many of his Islamist subjects, a sympathy which gives this book its deeply moving quality (and if his recent marriage to a Pakistani journalist, Nadira Khanum Ahi, acquires him of any charge of post anti-Muslim prejudice, some of his most justifi-

Another clue I believe lies in his observation that, "Good or valuable writing is more than a technical skill; it depends on a certain moral wholeness in the writer." Naipaul writes acutely of the way in which a search for wholeness through "adherence to causes like Communism or Islam leads to writers falsifying their calling and becoming second rate; but he also "understands very well the burning needs which drive men and women into that search." ■

Financial Times Syndication

China and Taiwan start talks

**Middle
East Books
by
Khairi Janbaksh
Anniversaries**

Perhaps amidst all the celebrations it is time for Israel to reflect, and aim at making the necessary steps to achieve reconciliation with its Arab neighbors, who without any doubt want the balance of justice/injustice redressed, and wish for a partnership of equals in a region of peace, stability and prosperity. Since injustice can only breed resentment and rejection, it must not be allowed to continue. ■

Insurance companies see light at end of tunnel

The two airlines also believe that code-sharing will be beneficial to their customers, employees and shareholders. Because certain types of code-sharing are subject to provisions in the labour contracts of both companies, the issue will be addressed in further discussions between US Airways and its pilots, and between American and its pilots. Code-sharing on the regional carriers of both companies, American Eagle and US Airways Express, is expected to be implemented shortly on certain flight segments. ■

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The Star

Edited by Abdul-Hamid Addasi

Lebanon victory sparks major celebration Al Riyadi takes Asian bronze

BEIRUT, LEBANON—Al Riyadi returned to Lebanon this morning with the bronze medal after taking third position in the Asian Basketball Championship.

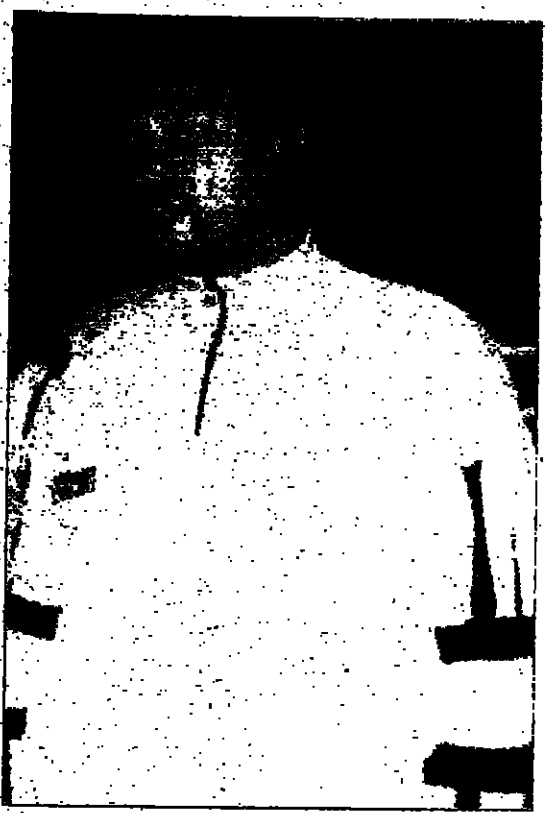
Al Riyadi took the third place after playing Hyundai Dinet (Southern Korea) in the game that determined the third and fourth positions.

Sporting defeated Hyundai Dinet by 10 points 87-77 after leading at the half 51-36.

Al Riyadi led for most of the game and performed much better than Hyundai Dinet.

Al Riyadi would have played against this team in the semi-final and reached the final easily had they not lost to Toshiba Red Thunders in the 1st round. They took 2nd position in their group due to that defeat and played against the Chinese team in the semi-final instead of challenging them in the final. Al Riyadi's result in this tournament wasn't enough for the Lebanese team, who received two additional awards.

The first was for Elie Naser, who took the best 6th man award, and the second was for Michael Cumberland who was selected as the Most Valuable Player in the tournament. The team will be celebrating through the week at the Al Riyadi Club, Manara, in Lebanon.



Michael Cumberland (MVP)

Midfielder Reyna capable of bringing it all back home US team puts fate in hands of 'future'

ATLANTA—If there's a question mark over the future of soccer in the United States, the answer may lie in Claudio Reyna.

The 24-year-old, midfield player is regarded as one of the most talented players the US has ever produced—and now, he'll get the chance to showcase those talents to the world, this time with the added pressure of "leading" an experienced American team at the World Cup finals in France.

"Claudio's now at an age where he has enough experience and leadership ability to take a team on his shoulders and make something of it," said US coach Steve Sampson. "The older players have a very high regard for Claudio."

So it seems the promise of the star player from the University of Virginia has been realized in the professional ranks, but the transformation took time.

Bayer Leverkusen, a German club, gave him his first break in 1994, but his career stalled as he spent more time on the bench than on the playing field. A move to rival Wolfsburg followed last season, and now Reyna has finally started to show his real worth.

"It's given me a confidence that I didn't have when I wasn't playing every week," said Reyna. "Then, I'd be a substitute one time or play only a little. You don't have the same confidence that you do when you play every week and you do well against good competition."

"Once he moved to Wolfsburg," added Sampson, "he gained a level of confidence I've never seen in him before. He's taking the free kicks, he's taking the corner kicks, he's the playmaker in midfield, he's really the 'go-to' guy. He's scoring goals in the flow of the game and he's communicating on the field and telling people where to go, and that's very positive—for him, for me, and especially for the team."

Reyna also brings experience to the US team—he's played in more than 50 internationals and two Olympics—and was on the World Cup

Croatia is World Cup 'dark horse'

ZAGREB, Croatia—Croatia needed a playoff victory to get into the World Cup for the first time. And the small, boom-shaped country on the Adriatic Sea has less people than many countries in the tournament have registered soccer players.

Still, the Croats have plenty of talent and are considered by far the best World Cup rookies. "If we pass the first round, I guarantee that we can beat anyone," captain Zvonimir Boban said.

Boban, Davor Suker and Robert Prosinecki formed the hub of the under-20 Yugoslav national team that won that age group's World Cup in Chile in 1987.

When Yugoslavia violently broke up into independent states in 1991, the three doffed the traditional Yugoslav blue-and-white checkered shirts of their native Croatia to guide an extremely gifted crop of players.

The fledgling nation has 24 wins, 10 draws and only seven losses, including convincing victories over three-time World Cup champion Italy, ex-European champion Denmark, and Spain. Croatia defeated Ukraine in a two-game series last November for a berth in France.

The World Cup, which begins June 10, is the second major tournament the Croats have qualified for in their first attempt. In 1996, they made it into the European Championship and reached the quarterfinals, where they



were edged out by Germany, the tournament's eventual winner.

Indeed, if the Croats can advance out of their first-round World Cup group, which also includes Argentina and rookies Japan and Jamaica, they may have an upset or two in them.

"I'm full of energy and my optimism is as hard as granite," coach Miroslav Blazevic said. "Croatia boasts a class like few other nations."

Croatia's stars are spread out across the globe. Of the team's starting 11, only goalkeeper Drazen Ladic and Prosinecki, are based in the country. Boban, who also plays for AC Milan, is a linchpin in the midfield. Lanky forward Alen Boksic is the sting behind a potent attack-line. He helped lead Italian powerhouse Juventus to a league title last year and is now in peak form for Rome's Lazio.

Hussein club president Ali Kober said that he believes, therefore, that it is fair that Al Wihdat takes the biggest share of revenues. Both clubs threatened that they may withdraw from the league if the Federation changes the current method of distributing revenues.

Al Jazeera club took a neutral position when its president Abdullah Kiswani urged HRH Prince Abdullah, president of the JFA to resolve the deadlock over the suspension of the Premier League Championship.

It is noteworthy that the suspension of the league will kill the enthusiasm of the spectators who attended the

Jarar leads pack in third speed race

AMMAN (Star)—The Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) continues its series of speed races with a third contest sponsored by Pepsi-Cola.

Jordanian driver Yaser Jarar, who scored the best time in the previous race took advantage of Gaith Belbesi's absence and came in on top with a time of 2:22.37 min. Belbesi is one of Jordan's toughest drivers and was the winner of the previous race. Edmir Shishuni and Amir Al Najjar took 2nd and 3rd places with times of 2:27.51 min and 2:27.95 min.

In addition to Belbesi, the race witnessed the absence of good drivers like Ahmad Dawoud and Yanal Kumouk. No female participation was recorded.

Prizes for the winners were awarded by RAJC Director Hassan Alaa El Dein at the end of the race.



MONDIAL NEWS

FIFA nervous about bribes

LONDON—Soccer's governing body is worried about the possibility of bribes at this summer's World Cup. FIFA's acting General Secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen said the 32 participating teams will be given detailed warning from officials and that security

teams would be placed in the hotels of players and referees.

But he admitted detection would be difficult. "If you bribe a defender and he provokes an unnecessary penalty, nobody will know," Zen-Ruffinen told London's Sunday Times.

"The most serious problem we have had so far was in the under-17s World Cup competition in Qatar in 1995," he added.

"We were contacted by coaches in the hotels who said some of their players had spent time in rooms with people coming to them offering gifts. They weren't asking for anything in exchange."

The newspaper said gangs behind the potential bribes were based in Asia, where millions will be bet on every game. The quarterfinal games are believed to be particularly susceptible.

Peter Velappan, head of the Asian Football Confederation, said match-fixing syndicates had targeted the quarterfinals of the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

The newspaper said referees would be placed under guard in their hotels. It said referees traveling to matches outside Paris would be accompanied by FIFA officials.

Ba confident of place on French squad

PARIS—French winger Ibrahim Ba says he can't imagine that he won't be selected when France announces its World Cup team this week.

Ba said he was confident the French team had a chance to win the World Cup. But he added that the team needed to be balanced and calm in order to play well.

"I have the French team in my heart. I know I am ready," Ba said in an interview that appeared Sunday in the French weekly newspaper, *Le Journal du Dimanche*.

Ba also said he thought this year's team was stronger than in 1986, when it was led by soccer star Michel Platini, now the head of the French Organizing Committee.

French trainer Aimé Jacquet is expected to announce his choices for the French World Cup team on Tuesday.

"I can't imagine not being in the World Cup," Ba said.

Klinsmann mum on future plans

LONDON—German star Juergen Klinsmann won't discuss his future with the English club Tottenham—his second stint with the team—until after the World Cup.

Klinsmann, who scored four goals Saturday in a 6-2 win over Wimbledon that virtually assured Tottenham of staying in the Premier League, has had a difficult relationship with coach Christian Gross.

"I don't

want to say

anything about

that now

because there

was so much

said in the last

few weeks

before I left

the first time,"

said Klins-

mann, who

arrived at Tot-

tenham four

months ago on

a short-term

contract.

"All I want

to say is that

today was certainly

one of the most exciting

games of my

career in 16 years

as a professional. It was a wonderful

feeling."

Gross, however, indicated Klinsmann would probably not

return.

"No, there is no chance of talking to him about staying

because it was always the agreement that he would leave at the

end of the season," Gross said.

Stuttgart striker Bobic out with injuries

STUTTGART, Germany—Fredi Bobic, Stuttgart's striker who hopes to make Germany's World Cup squad, will be sidelined for about 10 days after injuring ligaments in his left ankle, his club said Sunday.

Bobic will miss the last round of the Bundesliga next weekend and is unlikely to be fit for Stuttgart's Cup Winners Cup game against Chelsea on May 13 in Stockholm.

Bobic will not need surgery. He was injured in Stuttgart's 4-2 loss at Karlsruhe in a Bundesliga game Saturday.

Konsel doubtful for Austria World Cup bid

ROME—Austrian goalkeeper Michael Konsel's status for the World Cup is in doubt after he injured himself during practice with his club.

Konsel, 36, pulled a muscle in his lower left leg at the end of AS Roma's training session Saturday, as he dived to block a shot. He was held out of Roma's match against AC Milan on Sunday and is likely sidelined for the rest of the Serie A season.

The veteran's injury could take as long as a month to heal, the Roma team doctor said.

Konsel is one of the top players on Austria's squad for France '98, where the country is bracketed with Italy, Chile and Cameroon in the first round.

Brazilian midfielder dazzles in Tunisian debut

SOUSSE, Tunisia—Brazilian Jose Clayton, who took Tunisian nationality in March, made an impressive debut in a 1-1 draw in a friendly international against Georgia on Saturday.

Imed ben Younes scored for Tunisia 11 minutes from time to equalize a 40th minute goal by Manchester City's Georgi Kinkladze.

Midfielder Clayton has been playing in Tunisia for four years. Tunisia was missing out-of-favor-but-talented playmaker Zoubier Beye who earned the displeasure of coach Henry Kasparczak with

a display of petulance after being substituted at the African Nations Cup final in February.

Tunisia is in group G at the World Cup finals along with England, Romania and Colombia.

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Tunisia is in group G at the World Cup finals along with England, Romania and Colombia.

Song may sound victory for Camaroon squad

YAOUNDE—With his distinctive dreadlocks and standing tall in his red boots, Rigobert Song is sure to turn a few heads at the World Cup finals this summer. But it will not be just his appearance that catches the attention of observers, rather the consummate skill of a confident 21-year-old.

Song was a raw 17-year-old when he played at the last World Cup finals in the United States as a surprise selection in a team torn by internal disputes.

Now four years on, he has developed into an elegant defender who has the world at his feet. Song will go to the World Cup finals fresh from his best season yet with French title chasers Metz and having taken over the captaincy of the Cameroon team.

Song has a big responsibility in leading a country whose fans demand a return to the giant-killing performances of Italy, eight years ago and he believes the new-look Cameroon team has the capability to captivate the world of soccer again.

"My ambition is to see

Cameroon mentioned in the same breath as we were before," he said.

Song, who hails from Yaounde, is a graduate of Cameroon's under-20 team which went to the 1993 World Youth Cup in Australia. He was just 16 at the time but captained the team that included nine players who went on to win full international caps.

His game was modelled on that of his childhood hero, the Dutch sweeper Ronald Koeman. "I used to write his name on the back of my shirts," said Song, who moved to Metz straight after the World Cup in the US and very quickly won a place on the first team.

His defensive capabilities have been among the major reasons why the team, from Lorraine, have been title contenders for



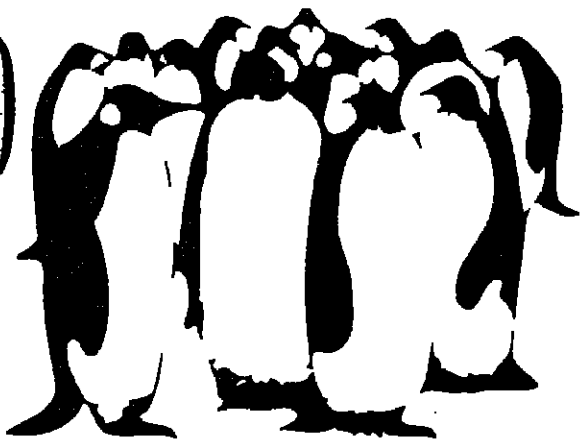
much of the French season. But at national team level, it has not been a rosy with Cameroon disappointing in the US and also falling at the last two African Nations Cup finals.

Song was one of few high-

lights for the Indomitable Lions in Burkina Faso in February and knows matters can only improve now that Frenchman Claude Le Roy has taken over as coach.

The Star
OnLine

<http://star.arabia.com>

AROUND
TOWNJerusalem
Intermarkets receives
Al Sawsanah Award

JERUSALEM INTERMARKETS, a local advertising agency has been given the Al Sawsanah Award for Creativity from Jordan Television. This was in recognition of the new logo that the agency designed for Jordan Television's 30th anniversary. Jerusalem Intermarkets is well established agency which has branches in most Arab countries.



World mourns passing of Nizar Qabbani

Charting path of 20th century Arab poetry

By Marwan Asmar
Star Staff Writer

The Arab world lost this week one of its greatest poets of the 20th century. Nizar Qabbani was laid to rest in his hometown, Damascus, having died in London where he was undergoing treatment for a serious illness.

Syrian-born Qabbani leaves an indelible mark on Arab culture and poetry. A strident figure in both his thoughts and writings—something which literary specialists will no doubt insist are sources of controversy—his great contribution to charting out the path of Arab poetry in the 20th century will be preserved along with other great masters.

His rich life, having now drawn to a close at the age of 75, began on 21 March 1923 in Damascus at a time of major social, political and economic upheavals. Although he obtained a law degree in 1945, and subsequently served as a diplomat, his interest in poetry—kindled when Qabbani was still a schoolboy—never flagged.

He was taught this love—and the craft through which best to express it—at the hands of the late Khalil Mardam, a poet of great stature. During that time, Mardam instilled in the young Qabbani the art of critical appreciation. Qabbani, already an accomplished poet as a teenager, published his first collection of poems in 1942.

Although he served between 1945 and 1965 as a career diplomat in London, Cairo, Beirut, Peking and Madrid, his love of literature never wavered. It was during this time that he began to sharpen his critical faculties, concentrating on topical themes that were hidden in the human psyche. Also during this time, he published a large number of collections of his poems.

But these were mingled with the burning social and political issues of the day. Qabbani felt that women were one of the most exploited beings in society, and devoted a good proportion of his prose to the female sex.

He concentrated on the body form, and the very aura of women who, in their gentleness and emotional intensity, acted as a veritable wellspring of inspiration.

But critics who see his poetry as one-dimensional in this respect do him a great injustice. After 1965 he retired from the diplomatic service, and became a full-time poet.

This is arguably the outset of Qabbani's twilight years. It was during this period that the reader began to feel what might be characterized as the "personal outrage" that came through in his poems. He wouldn't accept Arab defeat in the 1967 war, and openly blamed Arab regimes. Hence his thoughts and beliefs concentrated on what he called the Arab political malaise.

He always believed that this was related to the socio-political climate in the Arab world. He says what Arab people need is greater democracy and more freedom of expression, bitterly complaining at the same time that "the fingers of the Arab human being and breath



has been cut off, tongue cut off, lips taken out, ears taken out...

Qabbani wrote endlessly about Beirut, about the Qana massacre, and the Palestinians, the tragedy of Palestine and the children of the stones of the intifada.

It was during the late '60s and onwards that his popularity broadened. This was a natural result of the approach that he brought to his prosody. By all accounts, Qabbani was a modernist. Indeed many say that he dragged Arab poetry from its ancient forms into the modern world. This he did by popularizing it, making it topical, pertinent and emotionally accessible to the man in the street as well as to the artist and intellectual.

His poems are sung and have been recorded by Arab greats such as the late Um Kalthoum and Abdel Haleem Hafiz. Today they are sung by Majda Al Roumi, and Kathim Al Saher.

His language, syntax, and form, his intonation and general style were done in a way that appealed to people, male and female, young or old—an appeal that is emblematic of the generosity with which Qabbani opened up and offered to the world his whole being, with a style that identifies him as a master of his idiom.

A drawing of "Qare'a't Al Fenjan" (Fortune-teller, one of Qabbani's poems that become most famous when it was sung by the late Abdel Haleem Hafiz.



Patriarch of Latin American culture dies

Soliloquy for an uncanny soul

By Natasha Twal
Special to the Star

On Sunday 19 April 1998, Mexico lost its eminent laureate, 1990 Nobel Prize winner and patriarch of Latin American culture, Octavio Paz, at age 84.

Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo announced Paz's death early on Monday, 20 April, as Zedillo was returning from the Summit of the Americas in Chile. "We have lost our greatest thinker and poet," said Zedillo, commenting on Paz's death. He did not give a cause of death or say exactly when the author died.

Paz is best known for two of his earlier works: the book-length essay *The Labyrinth of Solitude* and the poem "Sunstone". *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950) is an explication of Mexico's national character. The book describes Mexican history as a search for "our own selves, deformed or masked by strange institutions," he later explained to a friend.

"Sunstone" (1957), the poem he is most famous for, is a harsh critique of what he said was the proud apathy common among Mexicans. It was inspired by the monumental circular stone on which the Aztec calendar is inscribed.

His best-known book of poetry is *Liberad Bajo Palabra*, published in 1949. Paz was born on 31 March, 1914 and

grew up at the edge of Mexico City. He attributed his early interest in literature to his grandfather, a strongly anti-clerical army general, playwright, lawyer and journalist.

Paz's father, who identified himself as a socialist, was a secretary to Emiliano Zapata, the mythic peasant leader of Mexico's early twentieth century revolution.

When he was only 16, Paz published his first poem; his first essay followed a year later. He went to Law School at Mexico City's National Autonomous University, where he joined a Marxist student group. He married a young writer, Elena Garro, with whom he had a daughter.

In 1937 Paz traveled to Spain to join a congress of anti-fascist writers. He stayed in Spain after the congress and joined the leftist-dominated Republican forces fighting rightist General Francisco Franco.

After returning to Mexico City, he accepted a scholarship to study at the University of California, Berkeley, and worked in New York translating Hollywood scripts into Spanish.

In 1946 he was nominated as the cultural attaché d'affaires in Japan before becoming ambassador to India in 1962. He resigned that post in protest when the Mexican army crushed an anti-government movement and killed more than 300 students in 1968. "It

would be difficult to represent a government under these circumstances," he told reporters in New Delhi at the time.

Paz always thought of himself as a socialist, yet since he was not afraid to criticize the left, he was eventually ostracized by them. His criticism of Fidel Castro's Cuba especially drew the ire of leftist intellectuals.

Paz's marriage to Elena Garro ended angrily after two decades, and in 1966 he married Maria Jose, who remained his love until his dying day.

In 1976, Paz founded a Mexican journal "Vuelta" which became one of Latin America's most prestigious literary magazines.

The poet also received the most important award in the Spanish-speaking world, the Cervantes Prize, in 1981.

Paz was a genuine poet, essayist and also a great humanist. His poetic corpus is nourished by the belief that poetry constitutes, as American poet Eliot Weinberger said about Paz's work, "the secret religion of the modern age."

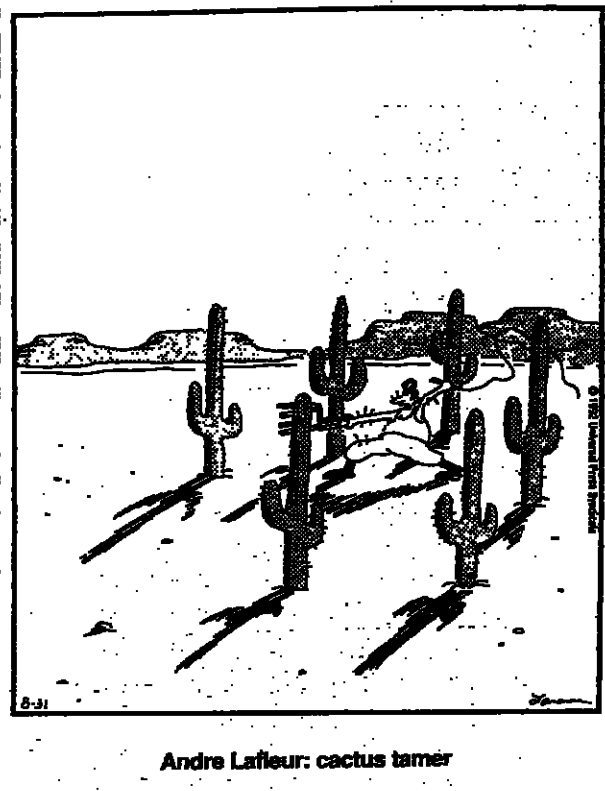
His loss is indeed a tragic one, not only for the Mexican people, but also for those people who value the intersecting worlds of the intellect and the imagination, most especially the uncanny way Paz seemed able to weave these into a deeply felt whole.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Look here, McGinnis—hundreds of bright copper kettles, warm woolen mittens, brown paper packages tied up with string... Someone was after a few of this guy's favorite things."



Andre Lafleur: cactus tamer

AGENDA

■ **Homage to Federico Garcia Lorca**
Instituto Cervantes is presenting through the month of May a program of films, lectures, music and readings in homage to Andalusian poet Garcia Lorca. Schedule as follows:

May 7—*El balcón abierto* (1984) Film in Spanish based on Lorca's life and poetry, in which certain of his characters take on a life of their own. At Instituto Cervantes (near third circle, behind the InterContinental Hotel) 5 pm

May 10/11—Lorca was not only a poet and dramatist—he also composed music. Guitarist Rafael Serrallés performs Lorca's work in two concerts. The first, on May 10, will be held in the Union Bank Hall in Shmel-sani at 5 pm. The second, on May 11, will be performed at Instituto Cervantes at 8 pm.

May 11—lectures by Drs. Mahmud Ali Makki and Abdel Aziz open an exhibition of Lorca's books translated into Arabic along with more than 50 photographs of the poet. At Instituto Cervantes, 6 pm

May 14—*Bodas de sangre* (1981) film version of a Lorca play. Surreal drama in which a bridegroom and the mysterious "Leonardo" fight and mortally wound each other in the presence of the bride. In Spanish only, at Instituto Cervantes, 5 pm. A second screening of the film—this one with English subtitles, and called *Blood Wedding*—takes place May 17, at 5 pm.

■ **American Arts Festival, May 10-13**
The first American Arts Festival, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, takes place over the course of four days at the American Center. Schedule as follows:

May 10—exhibition by jewelry artist, Suzanne El Masry opens at 6 pm in the American Center Exhibition Hall, and runs until May 25. Ms El Masry will also conduct a workshop, "New Jewelry Design Techniques," on May 13. For further information, call, 592 0101, ext. 2579

Also on May 10, an exhibition of sculpture by Samer Tabbaa will open at the

American Center at 6 pm, and continue through May 25. A critic noted that Samer's pieces "stun the layman, confuse other artists, and inspire writers."

May 11—Guitar concert by Jad Azkoul. Program includes pieces by Villa-Lobos, and Lourival Silvestre. In the American Center Courtyard, 7 pm. On May 12, Mr Azkoul will give a workshop at the National Music Conservatory. If interested, call the Conservatory at 568 7620.

May 12—Founder and Curator of the International Council for Women in the Arts Salwa Nashashibi will give a talk entitled "The Politics of Identity: Contemporary Arab Art in the US."

May 13—"East Meets West," musical duo of guitarist Jad Azkoul and oud player Sakher Hattar. In the American Center Courtyard, 7 pm. Note: please reserve seats for all performances in advance, at 592 0101, ext. 2579

Films

■ Darat al Funun's Thursday evening film series will concentrate on Latin American artists for the month of May. The series kicks off with two films about Mexican artist Diego Rivera:

May 7—*The Frescoes of Diego Rivera*

May 14—*I Paint What I See* Both films are at 6 pm

■ At the French Cultural Center (Jabal Weibdeh): May 11—*Le Dernier Metro* (1980) Francois Truffaut film that follows the difficulties a film director experiences as he attempts to continue his work in Nazi-occupied France. In French, with English subtitles. Two shows, 6:30 and 8:30 pm

Exhibitions

■ Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan shows 99 new pieces entitled "A Suite of Heads" until 25 May at Darat al Funun.

■ Also at Darat al Funun, Lebanese/American artist and poet Etel Adnan's "Artist's Books of Art and Poetry" continues until 21 May.

■ At Instituto Cervantes: April 26—The exhibition "Symphony of colors" by Ecuadorian artist Olmedo Quimbata runs until May 12.



مكتبة

A GREENHOUSE FOR THE RICH?

'LEGS' FOR THE POOR

If Karl Marx had lived today, the title of his seminal work *Das Kapital* would probably have been *Die Information*. With the rapid advances in communications and information technologies (IT), a whole new world opens up. It is a world where, as Harlan Cleveland pointed out in his May 1997 World Paper, *The Information Imperative*, where the dominant resource—information—tends towards glut, not scarcity.

An enormously important feature of IT is the potential for development it offers the poor of the world. It is powered by a basic resource—information—that is not in short supply.

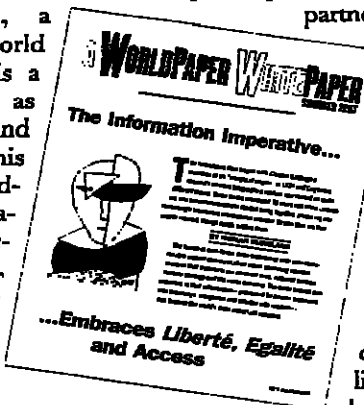
So far, the IT revolution has been supply driven—innovation in search of applications. Just imagine what can be done if those applications respond more directly to the burning needs of the poor: distance education, tele-medicine and market information, for example.

There is significant potential in IT to promote sustainable development and to leapfrog some of the stages of economic development undergone by developed nations. In order for developing countries to leapfrog, however, they need the "legs." The sad fact is that most developing countries lack these legs. Without proper telephone and electrical networks, information poverty looms. As it stands, more than half the world's population has never made a phone call, and 2 billion people lack access to electricity.

Meeting the challenge of providing developing countries with these legs is an ethical as well as an economic imperative. It is also a formidable challenge. Conventional telecommunications and grid-based energy structures impose limitations, especially in rural areas, because of their cost. New technologies such as photo-voltaics have the potential to reduce these costs but, regardless of what technologies are used, a large in-

vestment will have to be made.

Where would the money come from? There is no single source. Foreign direct investment to developing countries has increased in recent years, but most of these private capital flows are concentrated in a few nations such as China and bypass the least developed nations. This leaves public-private collaborations and partnerships.



...Embraces Liberty, Equality and Access

A good start would be to connect a large number of community centers in rural areas to pilot programs for distance education, tele-medicine, etc. I believe the resulting burst of creativity

and employment opportunities will speak for themselves.

Anders Wijkman,
Former Deputy Administrator, United Nations Development Programme, Stockholm, Sweden

COLD COMFORT

Continued from previous page

merged if levels rise by more than a meter, while others will be affected by the flooding of fields. Rising sea-levels also have the potential to change the coastal ecology, something that could in turn affect worldwide fish and prawn production.

Rice, the staple food for millions, is particularly vulnerable under this scenario. According to a study by the UN Environment Programme, rice production in Malaysia, for example, could fall by more than 20 percent over the next 30 years. Increasing salinity has already been tabbed as "the number one soil problem for rice-growing areas" by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, which coordinates the work of 16 international agricultural research centers worldwide.

The development of crops that can cope with salty water is therefore vital. Some progress is being made. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), based in Manila, has identified the genes that control salt-tolerance. This opens the door to breeding rice

crops that can cope with salty water. And such work is vital even if the dangers of global warming prove to be overblown—crops that can grow in harsher conditions look vital if the world's food output is to increase.

But such work is threatened by lack of money. Just over a year ago the

A new place in the sun for some crops

Minimizing the impact of global warming on agriculture will be difficult—but not impossible. The key research priority is the breeding of crops that can combat stressful conditions such as drought and heat.

At the Ibadan-based International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Nigeria, scientists have developed maize varieties that are ready for harvest as green maize in 60 days rather than the normal 120 days. These new varieties not only grow more quickly—hopefully before drought strikes—they also yield more. Again, however, the IITA has had to lay off research staff because of cutbacks in aid.

In a warmer world, the root crop cassava is likely to play a more important role. Already a significant crop for around 500 million people in

Africa, Asia and Latin America, cassava stands up well to drought and can be stored in the ground for more than a year. This makes it a key crop in times of very poor harvests or other emergency situations.

Research centers in Mexico and Syria are breeding varieties of wheat that can take the heat. In Syria, a variety of durum wheat has been developed that can grow in temperatures of over 40 degrees Celsius.

Among cereals, pearl millet is likely to be planted more widely. Compared with other cereals, pearl millet stands up well to drought. It also grows quickly even in poor soils. But, to date, it has largely been neglected by researchers.

—By John Mackey

IRRI, which is funded largely by Western countries, was forced to cut its staff almost in half because of reduced funding. Developing countries, for whom this work is most vital, often lack the money to support the research that is needed.

Meanwhile, the urgency grows. For

subsistence farmers—and especially for people who now face a shortage of food—lower yields caused by climate change promise economic losses, malnutrition and even famine, according to Rosenzweig and Hillel.

A warmer world, it seems, will likely be a harsher place for the hungry. ☐



At last count, **the world** didn't have any continents to spare.

The hard fact is that if high-yield farming techniques had never been developed, the world would need more farmland to feed its current population. And not just a little more, either.

We would have had to plow under the equivalent of Brazil.

And the United States.

And every single one of the 46 countries in Europe.

Of course, that would have meant destroying millions of acres of woodlands and other wildlife habitat—not to mention the wildlife itself.

Fortunately, thanks to high-yield farming, the world is quite capable of feeding a peak population of nearly ten billion people—on existing farmland. That's good news for everyone, because in a world of so many diverse species, there's just no land to spare.



HIGH-YIELD FARMING

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CEREAL BELT TIGHTENS

Continued from previous page

"If the US doesn't approve it, then it's going to be more difficult to expect any of the other countries to do anything," says Edward Hoyt, director general of EIC Consultants of Mexico. "It's not going to be lost on anybody that the biggest contributor is not taking part, so why should anybody else."

Without a commitment from the US, Mexico will have to face the consequences. Gay suggests a possible mechanism by the FCCC to ensure that the US lives up to its responsibilities. "Those countries that are not in compliance would have to contribute to a fund in such a way that the degree to which their inaction is harmful to developing countries would be less harmful."

With the fund in place, countries like Mexico could borrow money from the fund in order to adapt (to effects of climate change) via technological renovation. Such a measure would address what Gay sees as a global inequity in countries' ability to deal with the impending consequences of human-influenced climate change, one of the primary objectives of the FCCC.

"The convention must seek that the damage is equitable, but it never is," says Gay. "An equitable [arrangement] would be that the developed countries, which are the main cause of the problem, create a safety net for the countries least able to confront the change. And they're not doing it." ☐

DANIEL C. SCHECHTER IS EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE MEXICO CITY-BASED MONTHLY MAGAZINE *Business Mexico*.

THE WORLD PAPER

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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 9—15 May

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Johnny Quest
3:30—I Wanna Be...
4:00—Neighbors
4:30—Ocean Wilds
5:00—French Program
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—Discovery Magazine
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prism
9:10—Stress
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *A Brilliant Disguise*, starring: Lysette Anthony and Anthony John
12:00—Are You Being Served

SUNDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Pumpkin Patch
3:20—The Pink Panther
3:30—Skippy
4:00—The American Chart Show
5:00—In The Wild
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—A Tour in France
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Life's most embarrassing moments
8:00—People and Places in Africa
8:30—Challenges
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Correlli
11:10—The Nanny

MONDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Fred and Barney Show
3:30—Raiders of the South Pacific



NBA Games, Thursday at 5:00 pm.

4:00—Neighbors
4:30—Last Frontiers
5:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hope and Gloria
8:00—Perspective
9:10—99-1 "Stone"
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Law and Order
11:10—Bay Watch Nights

TUESDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pro Star

3:30—Small Talk
4:00—Borderline
4:30—The Health Show
5:00—Route of Capricorn
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Step by Step
8:00—What would you do
8:30—Rhodes
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *The Heart of the Killing*, starring: Tom Mason and Linda Blair
12:00—Metro Café

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): The Fifth Element
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Casino
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Donie Brasco/Titanic
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): She Is So Lovely/Titanic
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Titanic
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Fire Down Below
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Kamanana (Arabic)

WEDNESDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Mr Bogus Show
3:30—Oliver Twist
4:00—The Album Show
5:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Campus Cops
8:00—Envoy Special
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Nutcracker (Mini Series)

THURSDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Dinky Dis
3:30—The Animal Park
4:00—French Programs
4:30—Blue Water Dreaming
5:00—NBA Games
6:00—The Burned Bridge
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Big Brother Jake
8:00—Great Romance
8:30—Dr Quinn, The Medicine Woman
9:10—The Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *My Life*, starring: Michael Keaton and Nicole Kidman
12:00—Can't Hurry Love

FRIDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Teddy Rumpin
3:30—Wishbone
4:00—He Shoots, He Scores
4:30—Taran
5:30—The French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—The Fresh Prince of

Bel Air
8:00—Life on the Internet
8:30—The Brain "Evolution"
9:10—Babylon-5
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Nutcracker (Mini Series)

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI
17:00—Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE
18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Le Tour de France

LUNDI
17:00—Thalass
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Variétés

MARDI
18:00—Les cœurs brûlés (2)
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine

MERCREDI
18:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

JEUDI
16:10—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Atomes crochus

VENREDI
17:30—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine

Programs are subject to change by JTV

Fashion

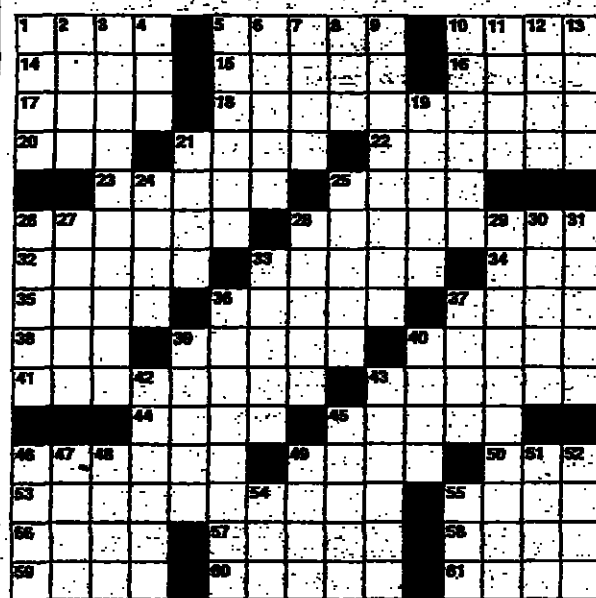


Valentino

Autumn Fashion 1998-1999



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



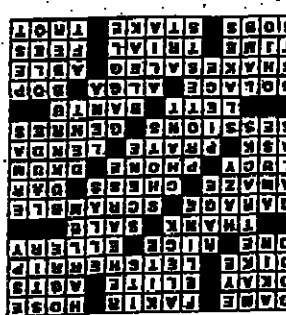
- ACROSS**
- 1 Lady of rank
 - 2 Dervish
 - 3 Garden item
 - 4 Give approval
 - 5 Crown of the crop
 - 6 Steps
 - 7 Holland sight
 - 8 Pull out the stops
 - 9 for the money
 - 10 Paddy plant
 - 11 Queen of mystery
 - 12 Show appreciation
 - 13 Auctioneer's aim
 - 14 Sedan
 - 15 Letter with urgency
 - 16 Fish with same
 - 17 Fischer's game
 - 18 Bygone
 - 19 Mosaic
 - 20 condition
 - 21 Love
- DOWN**
- 1 (old) Mafioso
 - 2 Shave, for one
 - 3 and yet still
 - 4 rooster
 - 5 Particular
 - 6 hard (quilt)
 - 7 Conventual meetings
 - 8 African
 - 9 Grief relief
 - 10 word play
 - 11 Kind of jazz
 - 12 Gets a move on
 - 13 Up to the task
 - 14 Tide's partner
 - 15 Court event
 - 16 Professional charges
 - 17 Sonority
 - 18 sound
 - 19 Contest prize
 - 20 Horse gait

OFF THE WALL

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SOLUTIONS

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: Both Taurus and Aquarius are fixed signs. That means people will take longer to make decisions, and be less flexible about making changes.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Group activities may be thwarted due to lack of funds. Pool your imaginations and your talents to generate more income.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). You're stronger now, so don't let an older person push you around. Your team comes to your rescue. They bring you luck and plenty of help.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Travel plans are hard to carry out but you can make final decisions. An older person wants the best for you.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). A friend gets rather pushy but it's a push in the right direction. Better study the language. Travel plans could materialize.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You won't get away with much. Sell something valuable you don't use to get the money you need.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your good looks and charm could earn you free lunch. Accept acknowledgment for a job well done.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Love should go very well, especially if you make a commitment. Your work dominates your life.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Carefully consider your options before making decisions. Those decisions will be written in stone.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're very good with technical assignments. Use a new tool to achieve success. Home is where the heart is.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Pay travel expenses. Save whatever is left. You'll need it later. Postpone making a decision. You don't have enough information yet.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're strong, but you'll need to be patient, too. The only changes accepted are ones that save money.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). There are lots of hoops to jump through, but you're determined. Get a Virgo to help. Follow your hunches and abundance is your reward.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Your work could bring you lots of things this year, not the least of which is romance. Learn to deal with in the system this year and you'll never be bothered by it again.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YUDAG

SOMYS

TUNBOT

TYMINE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

ANSWERS: GADY MOSSA BUTTON ENMITY

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Words of Wisdom

You can't point a finger of blame if your hands are occupied with the task at hand.

Revenge proves only that you are equal. Rising above revenge proves that you are superior.

Do not mistake rudeness for strength; it is a weak imitation.

Powerful people are admired not for what they have, but what they can do without.

Encouragement of talent is the first step in creating it.

Keep your chin up in times of trouble — it helps in keeping your mouth closed.

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Queider Trade markets new skin product

QUEIDER TRADE Establishment held a press conference Tuesday to offer its new product Phas, Hydra Blanc.

Ali Queider, general manager of the establishment, briefed the audience at Jordan Hotel about the benefits and high efficiency of the new product, together with Suad Morad, the cosmetics expert from Phas who also spoke about the effect of the product on the skin.

The new product is a hypoallergenic range of lightening and protective skincare with an active hydrating effect. It also offers Hydra Blanc for a corrective action, plus Hydra Blanc's special "extra," a hydrating action for an ideally beautiful skin.

With the Hydra Blanc range, the skin is more beautiful, not only because it is lighter-looking, but also because the moisture replenishes all its softness and translucence.



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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Diplomatie

L'Europe ou «la politique des pas feutrés»

Ce samedi, on commémore les débuts d'une Europe unie. L'idée a fait bien du chemin depuis et l'heure est aujourd'hui à la monnaie unique, au fameux euro. Une révolution, un dépoussiérage pour le Vieux Continent qui doucement étend son influence face au géant américain.

Yves Gazzo est un Européen convaincu. Presque un pléonisme quand on est le représentant de l'Union Européenne en royaume hashémite. Ce Français de 51 ans, aux origines italiennes et allemandes, revendique d'être au service de la fois de la Jordanie et des États membres. Il croit par conséquent que le pays du roi Hussein a tout à gagner à se rapprocher de l'Europe dans le droit fil de l'accord d'association (qui à long terme doit favoriser l'établissement d'une zone de libre-échange) signé en novembre dernier. Un accord de libéralisation économique qui n'est pas exempt de devoirs moraux.

Le Jourdain : La coopération entre l'Europe et la Jordanie est surtout centrée sur les échanges commerciaux. Le volet politique et culturel sera-t-il développé ?

Yves Gazzo : Il est effectivement plus facile de monter un programme de coopération ou d'investissement de 20 ou 30 millions d'euros. C'est plus visible que si vous organisez un échange entre des parlementaires européens et jordaniens. Des réflexions sont en cours notamment sur le problème de la sécurité, ainsi que des opérations culturelles ponctuelles mais dans ces domaines les idées ne peuvent être matérialisées du jour au lendemain.

Le Jourdain : Dans l'accord d'association, il y a tout un chapitre sur les Droits de l'Homme et le respect des li-

bertés fondamentales. Or aujourd'hui en Jordanie, la liberté d'expression est malmenée. Comment réagissez-vous ?

Y. G. : C'est vrai, le respect des Droits de l'Homme est inscrit dans la coopération. Ceci étant dit, il faut prendre en compte d'une part la philosophie des pays arabes. Ils nous disent : «Pourquoi nous imposer cette notion des Droits de l'Homme très occidentale alors que nous avons la charia qui prétend à l'universalité ?». De notre côté, nous demandons donc simplement l'application de la Déclaration universelle des Droits de l'Homme reconnue par les Nations Unies. D'autre part, il faut tenir compte des réalités. Dans le monde arabe, du roi Hassan à Saddam Hussein en passant par Afez Al-Hassad ou le roi Hussein, les dirigeants ont une durée de vie au pouvoir beaucoup plus longue qu'en Europe. C'est une évidence, une tradition avec ses cotés positifs, la continuité, et négatifs, un moindre dynamisme. Nous ne pouvons imposer un rythme et forcer les choses. Cependant nous avons à notre disposition des moyens de contrainte. Les accords



Yves Gazzo, chef de la délégation de la Commission européenne. (photo Shadin)

d'association prévoient qu'en cas de violation des Droits de l'Homme des mesures seront prises. Le Parlement européen a ainsi lancé des avertissements à la Tunisie, à Israël et à la Palestine sur le mode : «Nous sommes vigilants, et si vous ne redressez pas la situation, nous pourrions passer à des actions plus coercitives, comme réduire la coopération voire geler les accords d'association».

Le Jourdain : La Jordanie est-elle sur la prochaine liste des puits ?

Y. G. : Non, il ne faut pas dramatiser. Il y a, c'est vrai, des cas de non liberté totale. Mais cela reste un pays où vous avez le droit à une justice, où les prisons ne sont pas des bagnes. Mais nous souhaitons qu'il n'y ait pas de régression trop forte. Il faut bien reconnaître que

L'espion israélien qui campait pour la paix

«Ancien numéro deux du service secret israélien Mossad, David Kimkhi campe dans une «tente pour la paix» plantée près de la résidence du Premier ministre Benjamin Netanyahu à Jérusalem. C'est la première fois que je manifeste. Auparavant, j'étais fonctionnaire astreint au devoir de réserve», explique-t-il devant la tente kaki où défile le gratin de l'intelligentsia israélienne. M. Kimkhi, qui a pris ses quartiers à 30 mètres de la résidence du Premier ministre, est pourtant loin d'être un «gauchiste». Aujourd'hui consultant économique international, il fut longtemps au Mossad puis directeur des Affaires étrangères sous le Premier ministre de droite Yitzhak Shamir. Mais il estime qu'il y a urgence devant les risques de violence dus au blocage du processus de paix. «Si le processus de paix s'effondre, la situation sera encore plus grave qu'avant les accords d'autonomie, car les Arabes n'y croiront plus», dit-il avant d'ajouter : «Mon expérience au Mossad m'a appris que la paix est parfois le meilleur moyen pour garantir la sécurité». Des intellectuels israéliens se donnent rendez-vous dans la «tente de la paix», où David Kimkhi veut rester jusqu'à demain. Une demi-douzaine de lits de camps ont été installés. «Nous voulons montrer à Netanyahu que le camp de la paix, ce ne sont pas quelques jeunes écrivains mais l'élite de notre pays», souligne Nafthali Raz, un vétéran de la lutte contre l'occupation des territoires palestiniens et l'un des organisateurs de l'opération.

Décès de Nizar Kabbani

La Femme et la Liberté en deuil

Le poète le plus populaire du monde arabe pensait que la libération sociale n'avait aucun sens sans libération sexuelle.



Nizar Kabbani, décédé d'une crise cardiaque, à l'âge de 75 ans, à Londres. Ici, avec sa seconde femme, Bilgis, disparue brutalement en 1981 dans un attentat. À la suite de cette tragédie, il lui consacra un poème, véritable ode à la Femme.

«Ainsi l'oiseau retourne dans sa maison...» Nizar Kabbani avait exigé dans son testament, rédigé dès 1977 après une grave crise cardiaque, d'être enterré à Damas. Ses vœux ont été exaucés. Cette semaine, plus de 10.000 personnes l'ont accompagné vers sa dernière demeure dans le cimetière familial où reposent ses parents et son fils, décédé à 24 ans. Il vient de retrouver Damas à jamais, cette ville fascinante dont il disait qu'elle était «la matrice qui lui a appris la poésie et la création et qui lui a offert l'alphabet du jasmin».

Sur le parcours funéraire, beaucoup de femmes, de tous les âges. Elles pleurent le poète disparu, le plus connu certainement dans le monde arabe et qui leur a consacré tant et tant de vers. Elles étaient son inspiration vitale, à tel point qu'on le surnommait «le poète de la

femme». Chantre insatiable de leur douceur, de leur formidable influence, de leur corps aussi. En 1954, son premier recueil de poèmes, intitulé *Enfance d'une Poitrine*, fit scandale. Kabbani l'iconoclaste dénonçait le conservatisme et le machisme ambiants des sociétés arabes, y compris dans la littérature, en portant aux nues les courbes féminines. Malgré ses nombreux ouvrages, il fut imposé son style et par son modernisme réussit à moderniser la poésie arabe. «Il choisit très bien ses mots et ses figures de style», explique Nاهد, une de ses lectrices assidues, comme on dit en arabe, le cœur accepte directement les mots de ses poèmes. Il n'y a pas besoin de réfléchir pour les comprendre». Glorificateur de l'amour, Nizar Kabbani fut aussi un poète engagé et même journaliste à ses heures pour le quotidien Al-Hayat.

Diplômé de 1945 à 1965, il abandonna cette carrière trop compromettante pour fonder à Londres une maison d'édition destinée notamment à stigmatiser «le machisme politique arabe». Traumatisé par la défaite de 1967, il n'hésitait pas à condamner ouvertement dans ses rimes la politique des dirigeants arabes : «Nos cris sont plus lourds que nos actions, nos sabres sont plus grands que nous. C'est notre tragédie». Chantés par les plus grandes voix d'hier comme Um Kalthoum, ses poèmes continuèrent d'être popularisés par les stars d'aujourd'hui, Majida Roumi ou Kazem Al-Saher. Parfois censuré mais souvent couronné par les hommes de pouvoir, Nizar Kabbani était le symbole intouchable et libérateur du romantisme arabe. ■

Le Jourdain

Culture

L'arabe, une langue à digérer

L'Académie jordanienne de la langue arabe vient de lancer sa traditionnelle saison culturelle. Une XVème édition sur le thème «Comment maîtriser l'arabe ?» où les intervenants s'inquiètent des dangers de l'arabe parlé.



Dans cette publicité pour un café, l'arabe de la rue s'impose au détriment des règles de l'écrit. De quoi hérisser un académicien.

Dès l'ouverture, le président de l'Académie jordanienne de la langue arabe (AJLA), Abdul-Karim Khalifeh, est passé à l'offensive : «La politique d'éducation imposée dans les différents pays arabes est le responsable principal de la faiblesse de l'arabe moderne de l'heure actuelle». Il a souligné que le thème choisi cette année est d'une importance capitale pour les arabophones en général et pour ceux qui travaillent dans l'éducation en particulier.

L'AJLA fait participer des spécialistes des différents pays arabes afin d'affirmer encore l'unité d'une langue que se partagent l'ensemble des Arabes. Le premier conférencier Tamam Hassan, de l'Université

du Caire, a exposé «les fondements de la grammaire arabe et les moyens d'améliorer son enseignement». Outre les aspects techniques, le professeur a appelé à la formation des enseignants dans ce domaine et à accorder plus d'attention à la «conversation, la lecture, l'écriture et l'application linguistique» dans les livres scolaires. Il s'agit d'aider les élèves à mieux apprécier la langue arabe. Tamam Hassan a notamment incité au recours à des laboratoires linguistiques et a invité les médias à consacrer plus de temps à l'arabe littéraire.

Ce souci de rendre l'arabe plus accessible survient à un moment où l'on remarque une faiblesse presque généralisée de la maîtrise de la grammaire, de

la conjugaison et de l'écriture de la langue chez les jeunes générations. Les jeunes privilégient de plus en plus les langues étrangères, en l'occurrence l'anglais et le français, tandis qu'une sorte de négligence est réservée à la langue maternelle. Il suffit de noter les noms donnés à certaines boutiques : «La Mode bonbon Anani» pour un magasin de vêtements ou «La Terrasse» pour un restaurant, entre autres...

Par ailleurs, depuis la modernisation de l'arabe dans les journaux et à la télévision, on assiste à une dérive où le langage parlé s'impose peu à peu et bafoue les règles de l'écrit. Récentement la revue publiée par le syndicat des restaurateurs remplaçait sans sourciller le «g» en langue littéraire par un «aw», utilisé plutôt en langue parlée (voir illustration). Dans quelques annonces, on trouve l'expression «table lamp» écrit en caractère arabe ! Pourtant Abdul-Karim Khalifeh indique que l'Académie, en coopération avec d'autres académies des pays arabes, traduit les termes nouveaux. Il y a même un dictionnaire pour les termes industriels et technologiques. Exemple, le mot «fax» traduit en arabe par «nassukh» (copieur), dès le début des années 80. L'AJLA a envoyé une circulaire aux médias et aux ministères pour qu'ils utilisent le mot arabe. En vain. Les académiciens de l'arabe estiment qu'une loi répressive, dite «loi de la langue arabe», est nécessaire pour punir les mauvais auteurs qui multiplient dans leur bouche les mots non arabes. Mais le problème est sans doute plus socio-culturel que juridique. ■

Suleiman Sweiss

Dans le cadre de la Saison culturelle de l'Académie de la langue arabe, six conférences sont encore prévues tous les samedis à 18h au siège de l'Académie, près de la Mosquée de l'Université de Jordanie à Jbeila : les 9, 16, 23 et 30 mai et le 6 juin. Pour tous renseignements, le numéro de l'Académie : 5343500.

Retrouvez le Jourdain
chaque semaine
sur internet
<http://star.arabia.com>

Médias

La radio sur la voix de l'étranger

Avec l'arrivée de programmes en langue arabe venus de l'extérieur, le paysage radiophonique jordanien, notamment dans le traitement de l'information, s'est considérablement modifié. Sur la bande FM, on entend moins la voix de son maître.

RMC, BBC, MBC. Les auditeurs ont dû apprendre à jongler avec les sigles. Depuis plus d'un mois maintenant, la bande FM s'est en effet enrichie des programmes de radios venues de France, du Royaume-Uni et d'Arabie Saoudite. Pourquoi ont-elles choisi la Jordanie ? Parmi les nombreuses raisons avancées, les responsables citent la centralité géographique du royaume hashémite dans la région et son rôle clef dans l'évolution du processus de paix. Au ministère de l'Information, on prétend que «le climat démocratique de l'information pousse les radios et les télévisions étrangères à venir s'installer ici».

Messages d'auditeurs. Plus probablement, c'est de concurrence et de parts de marché qu'il s'agit. Dans un monde arabe peuplé de 250 millions d'habitants, les radios se livrent

à une lutte sans merci pour ne pas céder un pouce de terrain à l'adversaire. Ainsi la Jordanie s'est ouverte à la concurrence, en accueillant, en automne dernier, sur sa bande FM, la radio saoudienne MBC dont les programmes dynamiques sont diffusés depuis Londres. Les radios internationales telles que RMC/Moyen-Orient (RMC-MO) et la BBC lui ont alors emboîté le pas. Il aurait été suicidaire de continuer à être diffusées uniquement sur les ondes moyennes, alors que MBC, la principale rivale, était captée en modulation de fréquence (FM) avec une qualité d'écoute nettement supérieure. RMC a d'ailleurs l'intention, selon Randa Habib, chef du bureau d'Amman, de poursuivre ce passage systématique sur la FM dans d'autres pays de la région et notamment dans le Golfe (des négociations sont en cours avec le Qatar).

Bref aujourd'hui en Jordanie, la bande FM n'est plus une grande plage brouillée interrompue par les seuls programmes de la radio d'Etat (en arabe, en anglais ou en français).

Cette nouvelle concurrence, cependant, ne semble pas inquiéter le directeur de la radio publique jordanienne, Hashem Khrisat. «Nous avons nos propres auditeurs qui sont ponctuels à nos rendez-vous radiophoniques et nous restons fidèles», répond-il, un peu agacé qu'on puisse évoquer une perte d'audience. Au département des programmes, les responsables se montrent plus prudents et admettent volontiers que les nouvelles radios les obligent à plus d'efficacité face à des auditeurs de plus en plus exigeants. «La radio jordanienne a sa propre politique d'information, elle est ouverte à ses programmes sont tous en évolution pour conserver son audience et de cette manière, être à la hauteur de la demande», souligne le directeur des programmes avec confiance. Faute de mesures de l'audience, il est encore difficile d'évaluer les nouvelles habitudes d'écoute de Jordaniens. Mais il suffit de se balader dans la rue ou de prendre le taxi pour constater qu'ils sont rarement branchés sur la radio nationale.

Selon un sondage récent réalisé par RMC-MO, les jeunes auditeurs seraient en train de construire un rapport plus étroit, plus affectif avec les stations. Du coup, Radio Monte-Carlo a mis à la disposition des auditeurs un répondeur sur lequel ils peuvent laisser des messages, passés ensuite à l'antenne. On retrouve une même volonté affichée d'«apprivoiser» l'auditeur, sur la BBC, qui dès 1938 lançait son service arabe sur les ondes moyennes. «Nous sommes



RMC-MO, reprise par Radio France Internationale (RFI), ambitionne de devenir la radio de référence en matière d'information.

bien sûr en concurrence permanente avec les radios arabes, les télé et internet, explique le directeur des programmes en arabe, mais notre véritable défi, c'est de fidéliser les auditeurs et notre plus grand succès, d'avoir, parmi eux, des dirigeants des pays arabes». Une réussite bâtie sur l'impartialité et la sérénité de ses bulletins d'informations. Sa concurrence française revendique également cette réputation d'objectivité : «La popularité de RMC-MO se fonde sur l'objectivité, l'indépendance et le professionnalisme de l'information», assure Randa Habib.

Infos crébilles

Néanmoins le passage sur la FM ne risque-t-il pas de limiter la liberté d'information et de compromettre des radios étrangères ? Dans un entretien accordé au mensuel francophone Arabes, Jean-Paul Cluzel, président de RFI/RMC-MO, avoue que «lorsque se produisent des événements politiques sensibles, les pouvoirs locaux peuvent avoir tendance à arrêter

les émissions». D'où l'importance de conserver une capacité d'émissions en onde moyennes. «Pour cette raison, poursuit-il, notre émetteur à Chypre, nous est fort utile parce qu'il garantit notre indépendance».

Nombreux sont d'ailleurs les témoignages des auditeurs qui ont rejoint les infos des radios étrangères, au détriment des nouvelles trop formatées de la radio officielle : «Je suis fidèle à RMC parce que ses informations bien détaillées sont crédibles. Cela répond à mon besoin d'être au courant des événements «chauds» qui se produisent dans la région», raconte un journaliste jordanien. Une étudiante est encore plus tranchante : «Je préfère écouter la BBC. Ses programmes sont toujours en avance par rapport à la radio jordanienne. La BBC a une grande indépendance politique alors que les informations présentées par les radios arabes sont contrôlées par les États». ■

Youssef Abu Saleh

مكتبة النهر

Spike Lee gets beyond his game Ambitious sports film comes up short

By Stephen Hunter

HE GOT too much movie. That's the scoring total on Spike Lee's 'He Got Game,' which ultimately must be judged a mild disappointment. It's too jam-packed with subplots, suggesting an insane ambition to make not just the great American father-son basketball movie, but also the great American sports redemption movie, the great American domestic-violence movie, the great American exploitation-of-color-by-the-Man movie.

To its credit, the film does avoid the clichés of every single sports movie ever made: No come-from-behind, 'big game' win against improbable odds. It's not about sports as wish fulfillment, but sports as workplace culture and vernacular of physical expressiveness. It works at the altar of the game, and finds in the drive of men to basket a kind of body jazz of high art and total belief.

'He Got Game' focuses on the apex of that vast pyramid of aspiration, sweat, discipline and prayer that makes the whole system work, for better or worse: a young man who at 18 has 'got game' and how. He is that one-in-a-million, and as played by Milwaukee's Buck Ray Allen, Jesus Shuttlesworth is a super kid. He's got all the moves, can go to left or right hand with equal aplomb, hits from outside or floats through the ozone to the hoop, gets bigger as the clock gets smaller. But he's decent, too, and has taken on the responsibility of raising his younger sister.

It's to Allen's great credit that he's able to make this paragon seem even remotely human. He makes us see that Jesus still has a soul. He clings to the shard of his shattered family—his sister (Zelda Harris) and her ultimate good—whatever lies ahead for him must include her.

But Lee's view of this young man's dilemma is less moving than it might be. What we see is an embarrassment of riches, an abundance of possibility. It must indeed be difficult to have so many folks wanting a piece of you, but how common a problem can this be? While Lee makes it sometimes quite amusing—Jesus' visit to a fast-talking agent's palatial spread is the comic high point of the movie—it's not the sort of drama to which one can make an empathetic connection, which is why there are so few masterpieces about prosperous people. Their lives may be just as painful as ours but, really, who cares?

Rather, the emotional core of the film is an Oedipal drama between Jesus and his father.

Jake (Denzel Washington), a convict who is released from jail for a brief time after having made a Faustian deal with the Man; he will try and press his son into playing for 'Big State,' the governor's alma mater. If he gets the son's signature on a letter-of-intent, his time in prison will be significantly lessened. But given the nature of his crime, it's preposterous that he'd be the one sent to try and bring this off—after all, Jake killed Jesus' beloved mother.

Washington's Jake is the movie's best performance, but it's also the movie's biggest problem. He makes us feel the father's pain and yearning for some rapprochement with the son he knows he's failed. That much is real, but little else is. We never learn a thing about him, we never see him deal with the crime he committed and he never understands that his coaching of the son was alcohol-fueled and close to abusive.

Washington is so good he almost gets away with it. It helps enormously that he's got some game, too, so that when in the film's best dramatic sequence father and son go one-on-one, it's Washington's athletic skills that make the scene work.

Here, the story becomes infused with larger significance: What we witness isn't just a little one-on-one, it's an epic confrontation between the generations in a primal arena, the stakes fantastically high.

But why does Jake become involved with the prostitute (Milla Jovovich) next door in his cheap hotel? Why does Lee waste so much time evoking the parole officer's Spivey (Scary Jim Brown) and Crudup (Joseph Lyle Taylor), and then do nothing with them? Why does the movie have so many holes in it?

'He Got Game' does have one fabulous sequence. It's early, during and after the credits, a kind of tour of the landscape of American basketball, set to the mytho-poetic grandeur of Aaron Copland's most self-consciously American music.

Everybody got game: the home-boys elbowing for space to work their magic above the city asphalt, the lanky farmers' sons tossing in long jumpers in the barnyard, the little boys and girls who can't shoot or dribble but can play. All are majestic against high, wide skies and the sense of space and freedom that is this country.

This sequence, somehow, makes the poetry of basketball seem a national treasure. It's the purity of beauty and the beauty of purity all in the arc of a ball toward an orange hoop hung 10 feet above the surface of the planet.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Never had a date, but can sing about heartbreak

Country starlet wise beyond her years

By Robert Hilburn

LOS ANGELES—It's one of those Southern California days after a heavy rain, when the sky is so blue and the air so fresh at the beach that it is almost too beautiful to be true—and teen-age country music star LeAnn Rimes is caught up in it.

"I think I could learn to love this," she says cheerfully, standing on a narrow side street in the Venice area of Los Angeles while crew members check the lighting for the shooting of the video for her new single, "Commitment." "I never really understood what people liked about Los Angeles, but this is awesome. It's cool."

The terms "awesome" and "cool" may tip off Rimes' teen status, but there is little else about her to remind you that she doesn't yet qualify for a driver's license. Certainly not her success: the 15-year-old Mississippi native with the big, booming voice has enjoyed the most spectacular rise of any teen country or pop artist in history.

With her fourth album, appropriately titled "Sittin' on Top of the World," due in stores Tuesday, Rimes has already sold an estimated \$150 million worth of albums worldwide—far outstripping any two-year performance by such youthful sensations as the Jackson 5 in the '60s or New Kids on the Block in the '80s.

Since arriving on the pop scene in 1996 with "Blue," a single on which she sings with a power and character reminiscent of the late Patsy Cline, Rimes has performed more than 200 concerts, seeing her grosses escalate to an average of \$200,000 a night.

While her old classmates back in Dallas were still working their way through freshman English, she won Grammys in 1996 for best new artist and best female country vocal, co-wrote a semi-autobiographical novel, *Holiday in Your Heart*, and starred in a version of the book that ran as an ABC-TV "Movie of the Week."

And her co-manager, Lyle Walker, says Rimes is just warming up. Besides scheduling some 100 more concert dates this year, she has recorded a song, "Looking Through Your Eyes," for the Warner Brothers animated movie "Quest for Camelot." There's also talk about her acting in a movie next year, and possibly a Broadway play beyond that.

Understandably, all this activity



Country singer LeAnn Rimes has sold \$150 million in albums, won two Grammys, co-written a novel and starred in a TV movie. photo by Wally Skali.

invites concern about too fast a pace. Stardom is difficult at any age, but especially for someone 15. Nashville remembers all too well Tanya Tucker, the last teen queen of country, whose fast-lane excesses were documented in a 1997 autobiography titled "Nickel Dreams."

"We worry and we try to be very protective," says Walker, a former tax lawyer. "If we see things moving too fast, we'll call time out and shut down things for a while so she can smell the roses."

Jimmy Bowen, one of Nashville's most powerful executives for years, thinks those around Rimes may be deceiving themselves. He feels that being thrust into show business at an early age is so dangerous that he refused to sign Rimes four years ago, despite marveling at her voice during an audition.

"I just wouldn't sign a child," says Bowen. "I would be too concerned with what this business would do to her personal life. It looks like (Rimes' advisers)

are doing an incredible job with LeAnn, but we don't know now what price is being paid for all she's going through ... and I guarantee you she'll pay one."

For Rimes, all the talk about her age is frustrating. "One of the hardest things for me is having people look at you and say, 'Oh, she's such a cute little kid,'" Rimes says on the set of the video. "I understand why people say that. ... You only expect so much from someone 15, much less 13 when 'Blue' came out. But I don't call myself a teen-ager. I call myself a businesswoman."

"In a lot of ways, she's still a 15-year-old girl. ...," says Rod Essig, her agent at the Creative Artists Agency. "On another level, she's 15 going on 30. The voice is a gift, but she also has an instinct for where she wants to be with her career."

Others who work closely with Rimes and who have watched her from a distance agree that she is an ambitious and driven performer, one who is deeply

involved in all career decisions. "LeAnn is pushing us all," says Essig. "She's tremendously goal-oriented."

Though Walker won't reveal how much money Rimes is worth, she's probably nearing contention for Forbes magazine's annual list of the 40 wealthiest entertainers. She is possessed of a maturity and confidence that makes you understand why her advisers think she can handle herself.

One of the favorite twists to virtually every article about Rimes after the success of "Blue" was how the 13-year-old girl who sang the heartbreak tale had never even been out on a date.

Well, Rimes says, she has now dated and, like any teen-ager, she enjoys flirting. But she is worried about relationships—not just the familiar issue of a star worrying whether someone is just attracted by her fame and wealth. She's thinking ahead—to what a relationship might do to her image.

"The people I do go out with are 19 and up because they are the ones I can relate to ... and I think that's going to cause problems because I'm in the public eye and people are going to see that as odd. They'll go, 'What's that little girl doing going out with that man?'"

Despite the fact that her parents are divorced, Rimes says she remains close to both. She lives with her mom—they've just built a new house in Nashville—and she is usually joined on the road by her dad.

"It was very traumatic," Rimes says of her parents' split.

"It was one of the hardest things I've ever been through. But things have gotten better. ... I am very close to both of my parents." Sometimes, she admits, even she is overwhelmed by everything going on around her.

"People are pulling at you every minute. ... Interviews, TV shows," she says. "When you have an album coming out, you have to figure out what you want the cover to look like."

"I know some artists aren't like this, but I want to be involved in everything I do."

Rimes pauses, perhaps concerned that it sounds as if she's complaining. "I don't think of my life as just this series of problems," she says. "I know I'm lucky. ... I get to do exactly what I want to do in life. ... How does that feel?"

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THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Apple makes a comeback, announcing profits and alliances:

The state of the Mac

AMIDST THE achievements and setbacks that Apple Computer Inc. has faced in the course of the past year or so, it seems that the company is stabilizing, with announcements of profits in the last two quarters (ending December 1997 and March 1998).

This is good news for Macintosh users worldwide, who have been concerned about the fate of their favorite machine. From the looks of it, the Macintosh is here to stay, as figures show that it is making a comeback and growing in terms of user-base.

Some interesting figures on the actual state of the Macintosh platform were announced by research company, DataCorp.

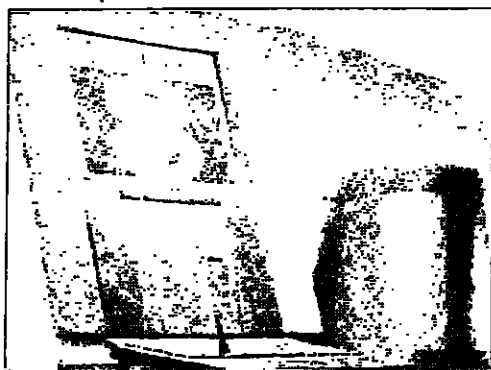
The research shows that Apple Macintosh holds a 4.6 percent market share worldwide, which resembles a drop from its once stronger 9.6 percent in 1993.

That means there has been a drop of almost 50 percent in the past four-and-a-half years.

Although this is a source of worry, Apple believes that its worst days are behind as the Apple Macintosh is gaining market share once again, thanks to an aggressive pricing strategy and better targeting in corporate sectors which traditionally selected IBM PC compatibles.

At the center of this growth is a new policy of wide-spanning alliances which secures the future of the

Apple Macintosh platform. Microsoft's announcement last year that it had invested in Apple Computer Inc., in addition to the company's commitment to continue to produce the latest versions of its software for Macintosh have contributed to this sense



of enthusiasm.

Also, a recent announcement of an agreement with Hewlett-Packard, by which the giant printer manufacturer will support Macintosh operating system compatibility in its upcoming printer models, has further emphasized the fact that the Macintosh may be down, but definitely not out.

Share prices for Apple Computer have been rising, especially with recent announcements of earnings.

The Macintosh market is significant enough for most players in the software and hardware accessories industries to retain Mac-focused strategies as part of their policies.

Research in Europe, by a

company called Context, has found that Apple Macintosh holds a 3.5 percent share of the personal computer market. This seems fair, but is somewhat dwarfed when compared to the 15.1 percent shares held by Compaq Computer and IBM—but then, these companies are the largest PC vendors in the world.

In the personal computer market, Dell and Hewlett-Packard are also ahead of Apple with market shares of 6.7 percent and 5.8 percent respectively.

Strongholds which the Macintosh enjoys are in the publishing and education markets, which have remained faithful to the Macintosh platform throughout the past decade.

This is a sign that the Macintosh still enjoys superiority in these fields, from a technical point of view.

Of course, Apple needs to guard its position and grow in these fields, without losing focus on corporate and home markets.

The home-user market, in particular, is receiving much more attention from Apple as the company has introduced low-end Macintosh models which pack power at competitive prices.

This comes after many years during which Apple witnessed a gradual withdrawal from the home personal computer market. ■

A set of steps, incorporated by a Task Force to counter the Year 2000 problem (Part 2):

Every business leader is involved

By Samer Abu Libdeh

THE BUSINESS community in Jordan looks forward to the beginning of a new century with optimism. As we draw closer to this historic milestone, the anticipation of a growing number of business owners and managers, here and around the world, is rapidly turning into apprehension. They are confronted with the possibility that their computer systems and global networks may fail because of an inability to interpret calendar dates beyond 1999. The implications of the Year 2000 computer problem—or the "millennium bug"—are extremely serious and may occur in every aspect of business operations. The countdown has started, and the deadline cannot be postponed.

No business is immune, every firm is affected—either directly, by the action or inaction of others. The supply chain of Jordan's economy is clearly vulnerable.

The Task Force for the Year 2000 has been formed to address this problem and provide a set of recommendations to be considered by business leaders and the government. The Task Force for the Year 2000 will make additional information it has produced available to general industry.

This information will include CEO perspectives on the Year 2000 challenge, advice on contingency planning, and a check list for small and medium-sized enterprises and guidance for directors. It will also include links to related Internet sites.

This material is primarily addressed to business execu-

tives and business owners.

Recommendations to be considered (Part 2 continued from last week):

Recommendation 6: National, provincial and regional associations should immediately take on a more pro-active role in awareness and support campaigns aimed at achieving Year 2000 preparedness. Initiatives taken should be publicly reported.

Recommendation 7: A Business Council on National Issues should address the Year 2000 challenge. The focus of such a bilateral initiative would be on mission-critical economic sectors and issues.

Recommendation 8: 1) All businesses, in their public communications and marketing campaigns, should promote the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the Task Force to both private and public sector authorities, and aggressively reach out to the various components in the supply chain as a demonstration that they are preparing for the Year 2000 challenge and are expecting the same involvement from trading partners.

2) All national media should continue to address and communicate issues that are related to Year 2000 preparedness in Jordan.

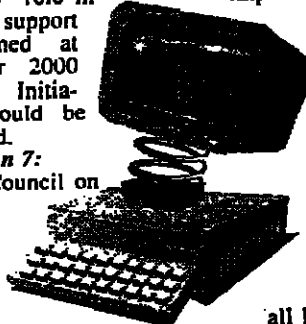
Recommendation 9: All levels of government should require their lending bodies/ programs to make the existence of a formal Year 2000 action plan a condition

for securing grants, contributions, loans and loan guarantees, where applicable.

Recommendation 10: Before introducing legislation or regulatory changes, all levels of government should consider the impact they may be effecting in terms of re-programming information systems and diverting resources away from Year 2000 preparedness.

Recommendation 11: Regulators at all levels of government should complete, by July 1, 1998, an assessment of the impacts that the Year 2000 computer failures would have on their objectives. In their regulated industries. Also, they should revise—where appropriate—their compliance assessment procedures and exert—wherever possible—moral persuasion on the importance of Year 2000 preparedness.

Jordanian legislative bodies should hold public hearings, inviting national or regional associations, relevant government authorities and others able to exert influence on the private sector, to report on their efforts to encourage their constituents to meet the Year 2000 challenge with formal action plans. The Task Force report and recommendations should be brought to the attention of the Prime Minister and prominent members of the private sector. ■



INTERFAC

'Cyber Souq'? Why not?

SOMETIMES I wonder why it is that our computer market never witnesses new and innovative events!

Has anyone ever thought, for example of organizing a special Shopping Season or Festival for computer products, in which all companies are invited to display their hardware and software, at lower than the usual prices, all in one place, which is as accessible to the public as a "flea market"—also known to us in Jordan as "Souq Al Ehtmayn."

Really, I think somebody needs to pick up on this idea, which has a proven success record in neighboring countries.

Many people might have pondered this notion at one time or another, although as yet none have put it into action!

For some reason, the Jordan Computer Society (JCS) doesn't initiate this kind of idea and neither do entrepreneurs, although there is a dire need for a single comprehensive source of computer equipment and supplies which opens for a limited number of days or weeks, once or twice a year.

You could call it Souq Al Combyoutour Al Sha bee, meaning the Popular Computer Market.

A refined manifestation of this idea is what took place during the Dubai Shopping Festival in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Computer product suppliers all got together and decided to turn a main road in Dubai (Khaled Bin Al Waleed Street) into Cyber Street, decorating it and setting it up in a way that offered an amazing world of walk-through bargain shops and stalls.

In fact, they expected it would bring in as much sales as the GITEX Shopper's Show—a major event which breaks records—and it did.

For around a month, the street glittered and show-cased all the best in end-user computer hardware and software products. It was interesting to note how much educational and home-use software was sold! That should say something to all our local companies, who seem to be having difficulties getting their home software products across to a family audience.

So, maybe we need a Cyber Street event in Jordan, to get our computer sector moving and to restore the enthusiasm in the end-user market!

Some would joke and say that we already have our Cyber Street in Amman, referring to Wasfi El Tal (Gardens) Street, which is full of computer and information technology companies of all sizes!

Of course, this helps, although it does not really resemble the idea. The point is to create a seasonal event, which is well timed to coincide with buying seasons as far as computer products are concerned. It could take the form of an open-air event, in the Spring or Summer, somewhere in an open area—for example, in one of Amman's commercial districts (Jabal Al Hussein, Sweifiyyeh, Wasfi Al Tal Street ... etc). Or it could be an inside event, organized very much like an exhibition, but with on-the-spot sales being the central theme.

Jordanian computer users will anticipate these events, and save up for them. Computer distributors and resellers will plan their schedules and inventory in such a way as to be able to provide excellent price discounts, and everybody will be pleased.

Of course, getting an event like this in motion will require cooperation from the proper authorities, especially if it's an outdoor event. This could be in the form of making the process easier, exercising flexibility in terms of arrangements involved, reducing licensing requirements or fees to a minimum and facilitating every other issue involved, in order to ensure its success. The Jordan computer market isn't asking for a nationwide shopping festival, we just want to insure that a micro-shopping festival would be a success.

After all, we're all on the same team: we want our computer market to grow and prosper, especially to the benefit of Jordan's overall economy. ■

News update

Gateway removes '2000' from its name

● Gateway, a top PC vendor, announced that it has dropped the "2000" suffix from its name, after using it throughout the eighties and most of the nineties as part of its brand.

The company believes that this is a natural move as the millennium approaches. After all, Gateway's technical achievements will have surpassed the year 2000.

Gateway intends to launch a

worldwide campaign to promote its adjusted brand, with some new ideas, but the company doesn't intend to drop its traditional image of black and white spots, based on the patterns of Holstein cow skin.

Microsoft reluctant to confirm Windows 98 release date

● It seems that Microsoft is not specifically stating whether or not its latest operating system, Windows 98, is to be launched on the sched-

uled date of 25 June 1998.

This may be related to the fact that Windows 98 crashed, as Bill Gates, CEO of Microsoft, was giving a presentation of the operating system! What is certain, as Gates said, is that Windows 98 will be out in "a few months."

These uncertainties come at a time when Microsoft is still facing the prospects of law suits filed by anti-trust commissions in the US, regarding Microsoft's dominance of the computer industry.

Sporty 200 increases appeal of Rover range

THE SPORTY, agile Rover 200 has been launched in Jordan by the Jordan Automobile Company (JAC).

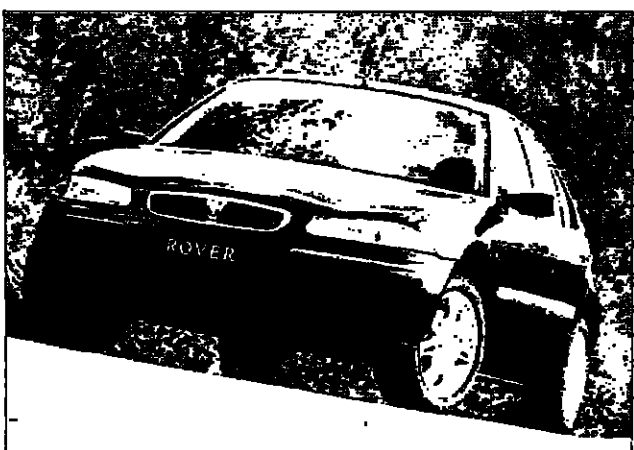
Manufactured by Britain's largest car manufacturer, Rover Group, the Rover 200 is the latest car to bear the distinctive Rover badge, adding a young, dynamic and sporty vehicle to the range of Rover 800 and 400 vehicles already available in Jordan.

Rover International's Middle East Regional Director Ken James said, "Rover Group is delighted that our partner in Jordan, the Jordan Automobile Company, has expanded the range of Rover cars in the Kingdom, thereby introducing the brand to a new generation of customers."

Rover has been at the forefront of automobile production since the start of the century, developing and refining an appearance unique to the company. The new Rover 200 series offers drivers new visual flair more significant than any previous Rover, with a low sporting stance and aggressive profile to underline its overall performance and quality.

Powered by the award-winning K-series engine, the 1.4 liter sixteen-valve Rover 200 offers exceptional performance, with impressive fuel economy.

Outstanding agility is another essential ingredient of



the Rover 200's appeal, with ingenious engineering and a torsion beam (H-frame) suspension that allows for excep-



tional handling and a very smooth ride.

The interior of the new Rover 200 reflects the grace and exhilaration of the exterior.

with special trim materials and colors adding detail to the fascia, door casings and seats, along with a notably high "feel-good" factor.

Safety is paramount throughout all Rover cars, with top priority on primary and secondary safety, and testing well beyond mandatory legislation. Standard on the Rover 200, twin airbags are provided along with front seatbelt pretensioners, which work in combination to give the ultimate protection. Side intrusion beams have also been placed in all doors to ensure maximum side impact protection.

Nihad Zacharia, managing partner of JAC, said, "The Rover 200 is a superb addition to a family of cars of exceptional quality and ability. An entry level vehicle to the wide range of Rover cars, it nevertheless offers the performance and safety synonymous with the Rover name."

Rover provides a range of automobiles to suit all motoring requirements, from utility vehicles to family cars, all of which are suitable for use around the world. Whether a 4x4 vehicle or a luxury saloon car, Rover represents a classic yet definitive style. ■



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Once you've caught sight of the new Rover 200 Series, it's hard to take your eyes off it: those curves demand attention.

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A Rover which would surprise everyone with its dynamic, youthful looks.

Looks which promise you an almost indecent amount of fun. Not do its good looks stop outside. Open the door and you can see the graceful curves echoed in the cabin; in the soft, rounded forms of the fascia and doors.

The driver's seat wraps snugly around you, the instruments are clear and logical. Rover styles went to great lengths to create an environment which offers as much pleasure to be in as it does to be seen in.

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